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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXII. No. 822. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1946 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

CONTENTS

	Page
COMMENTS	369
AMERICA'S EMPIRE	371
THE STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF MR. HYND	372
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic	373
DENAZIFICATION. By Sagittarius	373
THIS ENGLAND	373
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY IN EIRE. By R. M. Fox	374
THE MUFTI'S NEW ARMY. By Andrew Roth.	374
PEOPLE: WOWSERS. By Tom Harrisson.	375
A PAINTED CAVE. By Raymond Mortimer	375
THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT:	Page
Ballet at Three Theatres. By Beryl de Zoete	376
The Movies. By William Whitebait.	377
Cleaning. By Roger Marvell	377
Radio Notes. By Edward Sackville West	378
CORRESPONDENCE	378
From James Callaghan, M.P.; Gertrude Bernstock; Ismail el Azhari; A. H. Hourani; Sir Charles Reilly; A. M. Southall; Ronald Chamberlain, M.P.; and F. P. Walker.	
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By C. E. M. Joad	Page 381
REVIEWS:	
Nimmukwallah. By Ralph Partridge.	382
Capitalism Analysed. By G. D. N. Worswick	382
Maids. By Stevie Smith	383
Much Ado About Hecuba. By Frank O'Connor	384
New Novels. By Rayner Heppenstall.	385
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	386

WHAT THE ABSTENTIONS MEAN

THE precise number of Socialist M.P.s who deliberately abstained in last Monday's division cannot, of course, be ascertained. *The Times* put it at 120, the *Daily Herald* at 94. What is certain is that, despite the full pressure of the Party machine, a hectic press campaign in both Government and Opposition papers, and a brilliant speech by Mr. Attlee, at least a third of the Labour back-benchers felt unable to endorse the Government's foreign policy unreservedly. The wisdom of the critics in refusing to be cajoled by accusations of cowardice into putting their amendment to a vote has been amply demonstrated. The fifty-seven signatories were agreed that what was needed was not a vote of censure—which, as is now clear, might have precipitated a first-class Cabinet crisis—but a demonstration of the strength of the feeling in the party against any exclusive Anglo-American tie-up. The method which they chose was the tabling of an amendment coupled with a statement that they would not force it to a division, and that, if anyone else did so, they would abstain. When the two members of the I.L.P. demanded a division, it was found that the discipline of the "rebels" was a good deal better than that of the Government Whips. The Government has received a salutary warning which reinforces the T.U.C. vote at Brighton. It now knows—what it should have known months ago—that its foreign policy which, it boasted, had united the nation, may satisfy Mr. Churchill but threatens to divide both the industrial movement and the Parliamentary Labour Party. The "rebels'" tactics may be open to criticism, but their action revealed a division for which the tightening of Party discipline will provide no remedy at all.

The case put forward by Mr. Crossman is well known to readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. He argued first that the Government had succumbed to the almost irresistible pressures to which it had been subjected by the squeeze and counter-squeeze of Russian and American power politics. It had shifted from its centre position into what was tantamount to an Anglo-American alliance. Such an alliance, he held, is strategically perilous for this country and certain to destroy our moral leadership on a Continent where capitalism has already shot its bolt, but where Socialism is not yet firmly established as its heir.

Mr. Attlee's reply was forceful, good-humoured and witty. He wisely decided to treat his critics as misguided friends rather than Russian agents. He declared that the Government's policy was to work through the United Nations, which Mr. Crossman had not mentioned, and he rejected Mr. Churchill's Fulton speech "if it meant an exclusive Anglo-American alliance." But he sidestepped two embarrassing questions on the nature of military collaboration between Britain and America which, in the view of his critics, may be as close and as little appreciated by the public as our secret commitments to France and Russia in 1914. If his critics were simple enough to expect any clarification of the central issue which they raised, they must be disappointed men. Asked to open the cupboard and reveal the skeleton, Mr. Attlee blandly denied any knowledge of skeletons, but kept the cupboard securely closed.

It is easy to understand why on these subjects the Prime Minister's lips are sealed. Economically, this country is still dangerously dependent on America. While Monday's debate, for instance, was proceeding, desperate efforts were being made in New York to persuade the Americans to provide the dollars and the food necessary to prevent a catastrophe in the British Zone of Germany next month. Not unnaturally the Government is irritated by anything which may upset these and other kindred negotiations. As for our strategic dependence on the United States, the majority of the Cabinet is obsessed by the fear that, if there were any weakening of Anglo-American solidarity or military concentrations, Russian armies would sweep westwards and southwards. It therefore follows that military preparations, no matter how crippling to our economy, must be maintained at the level prescribed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington.

The aim of the critics who tabled the amendment was precisely to challenge this argument. They maintain that there is no reason to believe that Russia will start a major war in a period when America is the only Power capable of waging one; that our reliance on America to protect Europe from the Red Army is one of the chief obstacles to an Anglo-Russian understanding; and finally, that a close Anglo-American partnership fosters the growth of the extreme Right and the extreme Left in Europe, to the detriment of Socialist and Centre parties. Their challenge on these central issues was most skilfully avoided. But the mere asking of the vital question was a definite step forward. The Americans may at last realise that they cannot put the squeeze on a Socialist Britain too tightly without causing a violent reaction in this country. The Russians, if they are acute, will be quick to seize their opportunity to remedy the effects of their disastrous political warfare last winter and remove any justification, from the British point of view, for an Anglo-American alliance. And finally, if the Russians now begin to act more co-operatively, this week's events in Parliament may encourage Mr. Bevin to seize the moment to press forward with constructive proposals for laying the economic foundations of peace—in Germany and elsewhere—on Socialist lines.

The survival of British Socialism and of Western European freedom will depend, for some years at least, on a very delicate balance of power. If Britain, regaining her central position, can maintain this balance of power and thus help to establish confidence, then indeed the United Nations can begin to take on the aspects of real world government. But to enable Britain to achieve this centre position, a constant domestic pressure must be maintained on the Government, whose hands will thereby be strengthened, not weakened. Left to itself, it is liable to succumb to American economic bullying and to its own anti-Communist obsession. Responsible opposition to this tendency from its own back-benchers may be unpopular with the Cabinet. It is wholly in the interests of the nation.

The Big Four and Trieste

The latest course taken by the Big Four talks on Trieste shows that compromise is a word by no means finally discarded from Mr. Molotov's lexicon. In the vexed issue of the powers to be accorded to the Governor of the Free Territory, he has conceded that the Governor should appoint the chief of police and that, though the police chief should "normally" be answerable to the local legislature, the Governor should have sole authority over the police in times of emergency. As for limitations on the legislature's sovereignty, Mr. Molotov has now agreed that the Governor should have the right to initiate administrative measures "in matters which affect his responsibilities," and, subject to recourse by either side to the Security Council, should be empowered to veto any measures by the legislature which, in his opinion, conflict with the Statute. Agreement has still to be reached on the circumstances which should constitute an "emergency" and on the time-table for the withdrawal from the Free Territory of Anglo-American forces; but it seems fair to infer that the Russians are unwilling, on the issue of Trieste, to risk having the Italian Peace Treaty indefinitely held up. In this attitude they are doubtless influenced by the consideration that the working-class parties in Italy cannot afford to have Trieste exploited against them by their opponents as a nationalist issue. (The latest municipal elections in the large cities of Italy showed a disquietingly large vote cast for the semi-Fascist *Uomo Qualunque* party.) Moreover, in continuing to urge that the Governments in Rome and Belgrade should endeavour to reach a concordat on Trieste independently of the Big Four, Mr. Molotov is doubtless aware of the fact that in Trieste itself a "United Democratic Front" has been formed on the initiative of the Italo-Slovene Anti-Fascist Union and that, as a result of intervention by the W.F.T.U., the two trade union groups—the *Sindacati Unici* and *Camera del Lavoro*—have voted for a fusion to take effect next March. In other words, the issue of Trieste itself is becoming less of a national and more of a class struggle. The Russians accordingly may feel that the details of a paper constitution are relatively unimportant if a "front" of Italian workers and Slovene peasants is consolidated against Western Capitalism in Trieste.

Divided Austria

The Report of the Select Committee on Estimates is a timely, if unpalatable, reminder that, unless something is done between now and the end of the year, when Unrra relief supplies will dry up, the British Zone in Austria will be added to our Zone in Germany as a heavy burden on the Treasury. The population of the Zone, whose numbers are swollen by Displaced Persons and Jewish refugees, faces the winter on rations smaller than the 1,500 calories provided last year; and the Austrian Government has no reserves of foreign exchange to purchase imports. It is arguable that Dr. Figl and his Cabinet colleagues have been inclined to sit back and blame the Allies for all Austria's disabilities instead of pushing on with plans for the country's reconstruction. But, apart from the heavy burden of occupation costs (mainly on Russian account), an Austria divided by the present rigid zonal barriers is not a going concern; the Control Commission's recent declaration that the Austrian Government has henceforth "the right to control indigenous resources" is an empty phrase. So far, unhappily, there has been little evidence of a common Allied approach to the Austrian problem. General Clark, the American representative on the Control Commission, has now denied reports that the United States intends to feed its own Zone at a higher ration than the rest of the country. This may help to persuade the Russians that American policy is not designed simply to outbid them for Austrian favour. The crux of the problem, however, which will confront the Big Four, is that Austria is a strategic area. Withdrawal from that area of costly occupying forces depends on the conclusion of a wider concordat between East and West.

Constitution for Indonesian Union

Unless there are Catholics and Calvinists in the Dutch Parliament who are irresponsible enough to torpedo it, a Draft Agreement on Indonesia initialled by the Netherlands and Indonesian Delegations on November 15th can soon become law. It is a skilfully drafted document, the result of months of monumental patience on the part of Governor-General Van Mook and Dr. Sjahrir. The preliminary Agreement recognises the Indonesian Republic as exercising *de facto* authority in Java, Sumatra, Madura, Bangka and the Riouw Archipelago and proposes a voluntary partnership between the Netherlands Governments and the new federal State to be termed the United States of Indonesia. This Netherlands Indonesian Union, as the partnership will be called, will have the Dutch Monarchy at its head, but the two constituent Governments will appoint their own High Commissioners and have their own organs to promote joint interests, the mutual exercise of civic rights, the safeguarding of liberties prescribed in the United Nations Charter and the procedure to be adopted in the event of any failure to reach agreement. So far, so good. But the time factor is important; January 1st, 1949, is the date before which the new constitution must be set up. It is to be hoped that the United States of Indonesia will shortly have its own foreign representatives and information services and that the still troublesome obstructionists in Holland will not again be allowed to delay the settlement.

The American Labour Scene

In the United States economic prospects continue to go from bad to worse. A coal hold-up has begun in the bituminous mines, and the victorious Republican Party is watching the situation, torn between its desire to launch a frontal attack on trade unionism in the form of repressive legislation and its fear, if it goes too far, of uniting the warring labour factions in common defence. The C.I.O. Unions are in the field with wage demands, but are holding back in view of the uncertainty of future price movements; for no one knows whether American prices are going much higher or are nearly due to break after the very sharp increases of recent months. Labour has done badly in the elections: the landslide has affected the more progressive Democrats worst of all. But a direct attack on the trade unions now, in face of high living costs, might have a big effect in driving the rank and file of the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. into closer unity. Of this some Republicans are well aware, but they may not be able to hold back the others.

A Strange Plebiscite

The National Health Bill, now law, established only the main principles of the new service. It was left to the Minister to fill in the details by special regulations after discussion with the interests concerned. The British Medical Association is holding a ballot of its members to discover whether a majority of them desire further negotiations or wish to have nothing to do with the scheme. If the lead of the B.M.A. is followed, the doctors will vote against co-operation and the B.M.A. itself, with a fighting fund of a million pounds, will "prepare for the inevitable conflict." Apart from some strange observations in the material accompanying the ballot paper—no credit at all is given the Government for concessions already made, and members of the B.M.A. are warned that "the independence of medicine is at stake"—the whole procedure seems likely to achieve little except further confusion. Is the B.M.A. really prepared to boycott the whole National Health scheme? Are the doctors willing to say that the sick can be treated on their own terms or not at all? Most of the medical profession in this country are already under considerable financial obligation to the Government. In a struggle, in which the sick would be the chief victims, the doctors might not find the State such easy game as the B.M.A. would have them believe. In any case, sufficient numbers might be ready to enter the scheme and make the position of those who sought to hold out untenable. The B.M.A., it would seem, really hopes that, if it can rally a dissenting majority, it can make fresh terms with the Ministry of Health and eliminate the basic salary and the restriction on the sale of practices. There has been enough bargaining about this Act and the Government should stick to its legislation.

Railway Purchase Terms

The Government's decision that compensation for railway shareholders shall be assessed by reference to stock market values has the merit of simplicity. The principle, which is now discarded, of net maintainable revenue might, indeed, have been difficult to apply to transport undertakings, particularly in view of the unpredictable effect of hypothetical road-rail competition. In contrast to the precedent set in the case of the coal mines, the compensation stock is to be freely marketable. Until it is known what interest the stock will bear, it is impossible to judge how heavy the charge will be on the nationalised undertakings. On the face of it, the shareholders have no grounds for complaint; in fact, the holders of debentures and other prior charges will enjoy a windfall in the post-war rise in the market valuation of their holdings on account of the general fall in interest rates. Many will think that, in their anxiety to avoid any accusation of confiscatory methods in connection with nationalisation, the Government have leaned over backwards. If the compensation stock bears 2½ per cent interest, railway shareholders will enjoy in perpetuity a guaranteed income which may well be in excess of what they would otherwise have received, having regard to the fact that large sums must be found for making good arrears of maintenance on the lines. Some day the Government will have to face the question whether the claims of ex-owners of socialised undertakings can be borne indefinitely, or will not have to be met by the issue of terminable annuities.

Steel Shortage

The shortage of steel is threatening to hold up British industry very seriously indeed during the coming year. This applies not only to motor cars, but over the entire range of steel-using industries. It affects the housing drive, and even more the building of new factories; it reacts on exports over a very wide field; and it is not without its serious repercussions on the supply of a large number of consumer goods. In all these ways, it also reacts on the level of employment, especially in the areas largely dependent on heavy industry. The steel shortage is, of course, aggravated by the perilous state of coal production; but that is not the main cause of the new crisis. The position is much worse than it was expected to be mainly because of the failure of American supplies, which seem certain to continue very short through the whole of 1947—if not even longer. Belgian supplies are also short, and there is no source from which more than a small part of the deficiency can be made good. Even if there were no shortage of British coal, the problem would remain serious; for British steel capacity, except for special steels, was not expanded during the war, reliance being placed for basic steel on imports from the U.S.A.

Women in Industry

Mr. Isaac's estimate that 400,000 more women will have withdrawn from industry between September and the end of this year lends point to the question whether this loss of essential labour would be lessened by diminishing the present gap between women's and men's wage rates. On this problem the Equal Pay report gives the Government little help. Indeed, it was not meant to; for the Commission, appointed by the Coalition, was precluded by its terms of reference from offering any recommendations, and was asked only to analyse the problem, and to leave it at that. The consequence is that the public has now a pretty comprehensive collection of relevant facts, with two different interpretations put upon them; for three out of four women members dispute the majority view that equal pay, in the sense of "the rate for the job," would result in a considerable displacement of women's labour from occupations at present shared between the sexes. The majority view on this point appears to rest on their lively lack of faith in the prospects of full employment; for it is left unexplained where the men who are to displace the women in these particular trades are to come from. The women dissentients argue against the majority opinion that the low rates at present paid to women rest mainly on convention and balance of organization, and not on real inferiority, and that, given an equal chance, women will be well able to hold their own. They add that, even if, in times of bad trade, women are discharged before men, that will be to the good; for women's unemployment causes on the whole less social distress than men's. The foregoing argument refers to women in industry. In the public services, including teaching, the Commission favours equal pay, at least in the sense of seeing no serious obstacles in the way of introducing it. In our opinion the logic of the situation is that equal pay should be introduced wherever the principle can be applied, and that the chief difficulties can be met by raising family allowances to a higher level.

World Enlightenment

Unesco—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation—met in Paris this week to tackle its great task of world-enlightenment. Unhappily it meets in an international atmosphere fraught with the suspicions it is dedicated to remove. Even in this field of intellectual endeavour, nations meet with suspicions of each other's motives, or, like Russia, do not attend. They suspect that the facilities of free interchange of knowledge and information may be used to propagate this or that "way of life." This is against the whole spirit of Unesco, and it is to be hoped that the Paris discussions will remove such suspicions. For Unesco by definition must be beyond all sectarianism, religious or political-economic doctrines, since it is universal. Its creed can be described as "scientific world humanism." But Unesco will be judged, not by its intellectual ideals but by its practical contributions. The Preparatory Commission, of which Dr. Julian Huxley has been the Secretary-General, has done a monumental work in examining the vast and complex problems involved and in defining the tasks, and the priorities, to be undertaken in the immediate future in education, the promotion of science and the encouragement of culture. But, in this age, probably the most important aspect of Unesco's programme lies in the mass-media, the press, films, radio and television of the world. Much can be done immediately in these fields while the more systematic tasks of removing the blight of illiteracy and encouraging a higher appreciation of intellectual values are being pursued. Britain has shown an encouraging unorthodoxy in its selection of its delegation; it was particularly wise to include J. B. Priestley. This conference must be based on Mr. Attlee's words: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

PARLIAMENT: Humble Regrets

Wednesday

Captain Crookshank, an elderly Puck who specialises in *Schadenfreude*, was as unhelpful to the Government in supporting it against "a few dissident and disgruntled Socialists"—the critics of its foreign policy—as was McGovern (now, perhaps preparing for the long journey to the Labour Party's safe bosom?) in calling for a Division. Many Labour Members who had been uncertain in their views of Crossman's amendment, found themselves confirmed in an inclination to abstain, by the choice which thus presented itself between voting with a Labour-baiting Tory or an ex-I.L.P. provoker. Nor could they be taunted from their benches by an anonymous shout of "Cowards"! What distinguishes a Tory amendment from a Labour amendment is that whereas a Tory amendment seeks to change the Government, a Labour amendment seeks to change its policy.

The Prime Minister showed a better appreciation of the motives impelling the movers of the foreign policy amendment than did some of those who opposed it. His reasonable and explicit argument was at once a mark of his sensitiveness to the mood of his back-benchers and a tribute to the cogent case advanced by the Mover. Crossman, as though aware that two continents were listening to him, began his speech with restraint, but soon resolutely developed his theme of a Socialist foreign policy, evoking welcome jeers from the Tories. After this speech—whose burden is likely to be repeated in the coming Session—the debate limped. Will Nally of Bilston thought that the impression in other countries that there is a hard core of growing resistance to the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government is a travesty of the truth. George Brown, P.P.S. to the Minister of Labour and a former official of Mr. Bevin's former union, made his first speech on foreign affairs in this debate. As a display of *pietas* it was unequalled. Lord Hinchingbrooke, in a friendly speech, invited Crossman to take a Daimler to Cape Town or Buenos Aires when the motor-salesman on the spot would "tell him what British foreign policy is or ought to be." After Bevin, Sir Miles Thomas!

Unfortunately, of the many supporters of the amendment who had been chosen (by themselves) few were called. The result was an unbalanced debate which did not adequately express the deeply held opinions on the Socialist back bench.

The Foreign Policy Amendment stole public interest from the far-ranging and important amendments—thirty in all—which "humbly regretted" omissions in the King's Speech. The Liberal Amendment on the Closed Shop was moved by Colonel Byers in a sincere, emotional manner which would have been even more effective if he had concentrated on his general argument rather than relied on the case of Mr. Throssel as proof of T.U.C. iniquities. Mr. Throssel couldn't keep his job because he wasn't a member of a Trade Union; but having applied to join a Trade Union, he found himself refused membership. The Minister of Labour wasn't convinced by the illustration; nor were other Members who, none the less, deplored Mr. Throssel's dilemma. George Isaacs felt that there were other circumstances connected with the case which Byers had not been told. Without accepting responsibility for the T.U.C., he nevertheless defended it vigorously against the criticisms of Henry Strauss and W. J. Brown. During the last six months, the Minister of Labour has steadily gained confidence. He belaboured the critics of the T.U.C., happily confident that his back-bench case was secure. When the House divided, it was an agreeable relief—rather like a lovers' reconciliation—for Ministers and back-benchers to find themselves happily in the same lobby.

The Amendment on Conscription, the previous day, had caused less of a wrench of loyalties than the Foreign Policy Amendment. The Prime Minister had made it clear that Conscientious Objections would be respected. Victor Yates moved the Amendment with the eloquence and passion of one whose Socialist philosophy was formed in the evangelical days of the Labour movement. The fervent speech of James Hudson and unfamiliar interruptions by Mrs. Paton and Mrs. Nichol emphasised the strong feelings of those who supported this amendment, though a curious circumstance was the willingness of some Members—not pacifists—to vote against conscription but in favour of the Foreign Secretary's foreign policy.

Phineas Minor

AMERICA'S EMPIRE

It was an interesting example of our national ignorance about the Pacific that in Monday's debate, when the new American Treaty with China was quoted as a flagrant example of American imperialism, Mr. Attlee had to go away and look up the Treaty. It was more remarkable still that, having looked it up, he stated that it was a perfectly ordinary commercial treaty. By nineteenth-century standards this was perhaps true. It is a treaty such as British capitalism made war in South Africa to enforce on the Boers. It is a treaty such as the Chinese have desperately fought to avoid ever since Western penetration into China began a hundred years ago. It gives complete rights to Americans to exploit China without let or hindrance. If Mr. Attlee misses the irony of a treaty which, with a fine show of impartiality, allows any Chinese citizen to buy real estate on Fifth Avenue, the *Ta Kung Pao*, still a relatively independent Chinese paper, denounces it as the most unequal treaty of all time. In fact, one could find no better example of imperialism than for a great and powerful nation to beat down every defence of an economically undeveloped nation, and thus, as the price of supporting a corrupt and reactionary Government in civil war, obtain a grip over its entire economic life.

Mr. Clayton, on behalf of the U.S. State Department, has now announced that America is seeking similar treaties with other Governments. He says that America does not claim "any altruistic motive. The efficient operation of our production leaves us with great deficits and surpluses which we must trade out with the rest of the world." Quite so. It was this vast potential overproduction in America which led Henry Wallace to urge that America should continue after the war the policy for which Mr. Roosevelt stood when, in explaining Lease-Lend, he said that America had taken the dollar sign out of diplomacy. The present American regime has put the dollar back. Instead of the One World proclaimed by Wendell Willkie as the alternative to the chaos of conflicting empires and renewed wars, we have a grandiose scheme by which Big Business is to dominate the world by financial and economic power, while the American Army and Navy set out to plant the flag in strategic bases from Iceland and Greenland, on the one side, to the Pacific Islands on the other. Capitalist America is dreaming of Empire, while common people, to whom Henry Wallace appealed, have discovered, in Asia as elsewhere, their human, political and economic rights.

Wendell Willkie is dead and Henry Wallace is editor of a weekly paper. Bricker and Taft have won and the stage is set, as the President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has now made clear, for dollar expansionism. He camouflages it as "an invasion of American dollars, machinery, industrial efficiency and technical talent" which "will be welcomed in other nations as true liberators," and as the only effective way to meet "the challenge of Russia." Such camouflage is plausible to an American public neurotically afraid of the Soviet Union, while its implications are largely overlooked by a European-minded British public which knows nothing of the Japanese mandated archipelago of the South Seas, the peninsula of Korea, or even of Japan, where General MacArthur is ironically known as the "Mikado." Few realise that enormous areas of China lie wide open to American expansion. At a Press conference at Pearl Harbour last month, the Com-

mander of the Pacific Fleet, after discussions with President Truman, announced a new American Navy policy calling for a strong Aleutian base near Siberia and the extension of its outposts 3,000 miles westward to Guam. The Admiral, describing the new alignment of Navy power in the Pacific, said that this would mean the concentration of permanent naval installations in Alaska, the Aleutians, Hawaii and in the Marianas, which includes Guam. The unspoken objective of this policy was supplied by five Members of the House Military Committee which had toured the Pacific a month earlier; they demanded a strong ring of defences reaching to within striking distance of Russia. By way of illustrating this strategy, the U.S. Navy Department is creating at Tsingtao a great naval base to neutralise Port Arthur.

President Truman has now submitted to the United Nations a plan for the administration of the Pacific islands formerly held by the Japanese —the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Carolines and the Palau Group. These islands were captured by the American Navy in 1945; they have since been administered with as much secrecy as they were when Japan held them as a mandate. The people have no voice whatsoever in their destinies; the American Navy can use their atolls for atom bomb tests, can decide where and when a trading company shall be established and who shall be permitted to visit any of the islands. President Truman has offered to place these islands under the trusteeship of the United Nations with the proviso that the United States shall become the sole administering authority and shall retain exclusive military, naval and air rights in them! The plan has to be approved by the Security Council and is likely to be challenged by other members. Dr. Evatt has already publicly declared his opposition to American control over Manus Island.

The control of Japan is now virtually the exclusive prerogative of General MacArthur. The Allied Council for Japan has met regularly in Tokio, but its members, representing China, Russia, and the British Commonwealth, are regarded by General MacArthur as irritants, and the meetings as a nuisance, interfering with his routine of administration. The occupation is an Allied commitment, but it is in effect entirely American; the token British troops take no part in Military Government or in the reorganization of Japan. Mr. Atcheson, the American member of the Council, recently stated that "Japanese aims have become virtually identical with American aims." He chastised his fellow-delegates because they criticised the Japanese Government, making it clear that the present regime will be kept in power by American influence. The Japanese people are being thoroughly indoctrinated in the American way of life: films, scientists, teachers, missionaries, specialists of every kind flow into the country. General MacArthur takes every precaution against any infiltration of British or Russian ideas. Japanese economy is being thoroughly prepared for exploitation by American big business, and the New York *Journal of Commerce* already talks of Japan as an important factor in world textile markets. Strategically, American occupation of Japan gives General MacArthur a vast aircraft carrier in the preventive war against Bolshevism which dominates his military outlook. The British Commonwealth member of the Allied Council has proved an able representative, but he is powerless.

This is not all. We are accustomed to think of the Potsdam Agreement in terms of Germany, but it made equally disastrous zonal mistakes in the Far East—in Korea and in Indo-China. In the case of Korea, the country is divided at the 38th parallel. Soviet troops occupy the northern area, American troops the southern. The Allied Committee, to which plans were eventually to be reported on the unification of the country, has not yet held a meeting, since the American-Soviet discussions which were to formulate these plans broke down months ago and have not been reopened. The divisions between the two occupying Powers are far greater than those to which we have now become accustomed in similar circumstances in Europe. In the north the Russians have imposed a regime after the pattern of their Zone of Germany; in the south the Americans are building up a regime run by Korean leaders who are thoroughly Americanised. In Indo-China the Americans play no part as yet, but American strategists begin to show the same lively appreciation of the beauty of Camranh Bay as the Japanese showed in earlier times.

The Pacific today is the scene of an imperialist expansion of unequalled size and rapidity. The American Left, so critical of imperialism in theory, makes little effective protest. It is silent when American policy puts strategy before the needs of a real United Nations, when it reinforces reaction in Japan and in China, and when, behind the political façade of independence, it integrates Philippine economy into its own. It denounces Russia for doing exactly the same thing in Eastern Europe and is loud, though often uninformed and out of date, in its abuse of British imperialism. If realism were its habit, this American progressive opinion could legitimately criticise the British Government for too complacent an acceptance of the plans of American Business and the dangerous strategy of the American Navy Department. No one doubts that Mr. Attlee is sincere when he declares that British policy is founded on Uno, but if Uno is to be effective there must be a change, not only in the policy of the U.S.S.R., which now promises to be rather more co-operative, but also in that of the U.S.A., which appears to be increasingly imperialist.

THE STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF MR. HYND

CONVINCED that Mr. Hynd is an honest and well-intentioned man who is personally anxious to clear up the notorious scandals in the British Zone in Germany, his well-wishers have frequently suggested that he should be given more adequate authority and have sought to aid him by drawing public attention to evils which they believed he was anxious to end. A fortnight ago in an article which Mr. Eden described as "obviously carefully documented," this journal was explicit about allegations of corruption in Germany. We had in front of us details of cases which, whether true or not, were specific enough for investigation. We urged that nothing short of a public inquiry under privileged conditions would be satisfactory, since officers do not readily give evidence against other officers, while Germans have good reason to hesitate before making accusations against the British. We gave Mr. Hynd the identity of the responsible Englishman who had brought us the information and the names of the German officials who, under safeguards, were prepared to substantiate the charges. Since Mr. Hynd has complained that allegations of this type are usually too vague to justify inquiry, we expected a letter of thanks.

The actual reply of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was surprising and to us incomprehensible. He seems to regard our article and request as a personal affront. He first attempted to discredit the article by alleging inaccuracies. He was content by way of example to complain that we had referred to 26,000 officers (the establishment figure for the British Zone) when it would have been more correct to say "personnel"!

Dealing with our allegations of corruption in the British Zone, Mr. Hynd began by complaining that our information had been obtained

> as the result of a request by the Control Authority to one of the reporters over there, who had been repeating such allegations, to find out what evidence he could, and supply it to the Control Commission. He did that, but at the same time he brought copies of the evidence to the NEW STATESMAN before it had been sifted and before any check-up could be made.

Here Mr. Hynd was himself extremely inaccurate. As we had already informed him, the evidence which we supplied was not brought by a reporter who had been spreading such allegations, but by a particularly well-qualified person who had been invited to Germany by the Control Commission and who was then unexpectedly asked by the military authorities to follow up certain allegations and report to them. Since it is notorious that complaints unaccompanied by a public demand for an inquiry are not seriously investigated, the evidence was privately supplied to Mr. Hynd and a demand for a full investigation made in this journal.

Alleging that charges brought to him were usually too insubstantial for inquiry, Mr. Hynd then referred to this journal's allegations that private businessmen had demanded secret processes for their own advantage.

> We have made very careful investigation of these charges and we have found no single case yet where that has been done without proper authority.

This seemed a sufficiently clear statement that all the cases (supplied to Mr. Hynd a few days before the Debate) had already been investigated and found baseless. In point of fact, Mr. Hynd must have got his notes confused since, a minute later when challenged by Mr. Ashley Bramall on one of the cases supplied by us, he replied that he did not know whether the allegations were warranted or not—

> because we are making inquiries of this particular case to see whether the facts are correct.

We should add that Mr. Hynd had not even talked to the individual who brought the information, nor learned from whom in Germany the detailed evidence could be obtained. Mr. Hynd, we are sure, did not intend this manifest misrepresentation, but if Mr. Ashley Bramall had not intervened, the House would have been left with the impression that an inquiry had already been carried out into our allegations, and that they had been exposed as baseless.

Mr. Hynd's scurvy treatment of us in a matter where we were well aware that we have the full support of responsible authorities in the Control Commission both in this country and in Germany, is of only secondary importance. Far more serious was the continued false optimism of his speech, which led Sir Arthur Salter to remark that the Chancellor of the Duchy, "feeling that the situation was beyond him," was "retiring into complacent escapism." Everything he said added to the confusion of his past accounts of policy and administration in the British Zone.

The evidence of misery and demoralisation in Germany today is overwhelming. Some of it is again well stated this week in a pamphlet by Lord Beveridge, *An Urgent Message from Germany* (Pilot Press, 9*d*.). Our article, dismissed by Mr. Hynd in so unworthy a fashion, was not primarily concerned with particular cases of corruption. It stated a grave indictment which in the opinion of responsible people of all political parties must be answered as a whole. Mr. Hynd cannot be unaware of the facts. He has a good past record in relation to Germany, and is known to have fought behind the scenes for better food and for intelligent reforms in the British Zone. What, then, is the explanation? When he found himself incapable of carrying through the necessary changes, he could have resigned. He seems to have preferred to become the apologist for all the evils about which in his heart he grieves. He ceased to distinguish between enemies and friends, and instead of using newspaper criticism of administration in Germany as a lever for reform, he began to regard all such criticisms as attacks on himself. This is a personal tragedy. But our concern, and the concern of the nation, is that when responsible persons make a case for public inquiry, they should not be fobbed off with departmental whitewash, and that the demand made so widely and responsibly for a root-and-branch change in our policy and administration in Germany should be faced by the British Government. The strange behaviour of Mr. Hynd is, after all, only a reflection of the stranger behaviour of the British Cabinet.

A LONDON DIARY

In the lobby of the House as I went in to Monday's debate I met a Minister who remarked that the amendment would be a "fizzle." Coming out for a cup of tea after Crossman's speech, I met the same Minister again. He looked very serious. "That was an excellent speech," he said. "It could not have been more effective. These things have to be said; my only complaint is the occasion that was chosen." "What other occasion would have been possible?" I asked. He thought a moment and agreed that no other occasion existed, since a general debate on foreign affairs, which inevitably jumps from subject to subject, allows of no point being thoroughly thrashed out, while the Government is never likely to give time for a motion put down by its own supporters criticising its own policy. The King's Speech offers the only Parliamentary occasion on which it is possible for back-benchers on the Government side to obtain a debate on a specific aspect of foreign affairs, selected by themselves.

* * *

The Left Centre group, which has stated a reasoned case for "recasting" British foreign policy this week, represents a far greater body of feeling in the country than its critics usually admit. This feeling is particularly strong in the Trade Unions, which, but for very small margins in two important unions, would have voted by a majority against the Government's foreign policy at the Trades Union Congress. Spain is the issue on which sentiment runs most fiercely. Here is a question on which the entire progressive forces of this country were united, in a losing battle, against the Chamberlain Government. For a Labour Government not to be taking active steps to get rid of Franco seems to the rank and file an outrageous betrayal. Unfortunately, the way to get rid of Franco is not so clear. No one proposes a war of intervention, and the arguments against an economic blockade which America would be unlikely to join, are very powerful. It is clear that the popular forces of resistance inside Spain cannot do the job alone. If we rely on the generals, then we must offer them a King by way of substitute and not hope that they will make a revolution in order to put in power the type of progressive politicians whom they helped Franco to overthrow. But it is not clear that you would really change the regime by leaving the generals in power with a Royal figurehead.

* * *

The case comes to this. If the Security Council were really determined to get rid of Franco, they could succeed after some months of what we have learned to call political warfare. There are innumerable forms of pressure, diplomatic and economic, that can be effectively used in the case of an isolated country like Spain. We can support and strengthen the Spanish Government in exile. We have a particularly good weapon in the fact that Spain is notoriously a refuge for Nazis. I am told that even to-day Germans occupy many key positions in Spain, and that Franco has only passed over a few of the large number of Nazis whose extradition we demanded. In short, the legitimate criticism is not that the British Government has failed to carry out some violent and spectacular action against Franco, but that it is our fault that he is stronger to-day than he was when the Labour Government came into power, and that no one can see any difference between the policy of the Labour Government towards Spain and that which would have been carried out if Churchill had won the election in 1945.

* * *

I am dismayed at the suggestion that nearly two-thirds of Dartmoor may be taken over as a peace-time military training ground. During the war, of course, the War Office had to take over a lot of land for various purposes, but it is preposterous that these enroachments on our limited countryside and coastline should actually be extended now the war is over. Dartmoor is only the latest case. In the last few weeks, there have been justifiable protests about Ashdown Forest, Braunton Burrows and one of the most beautiful parts of the Snowdon range. Is it really necessary for our national security that some of the finest open spaces in this small island should be permanently closed to the public and sterilised by continual manoeuvres? I cannot believe training on this scale is essential for forces required either for home defence or as our contribution to Uno. In any case, some of these activities could surely be transferred abroad. As correspondents to *The Times* and other papers have pointed out, it is not only a matter of destroying valuable amenities unnecessarily. There are other questions involved, like farming and water supplies to nearby towns. If the War Office really has a case, it should be stated at a public inquiry. I am glad that Mr. Attlee has agreed to this as far as Dartmoor is concerned. The present method of taking over property under obsolete legislation after private consideration by the Service Land Requirements Committee, seems to me a furtive and irregular way of disregarding the strong public feeling on this matter.

* * *

The other day a message came from a D.P. camp in Germany that shoes could not be mended there for lack of brads, or furniture made out of boxes for lack of nails. The friend who heard this news promptly bought brads and nails of different sizes up to the 22 lb. limit that is allowed for a parcel to Germany. He despatched it and received pathetically grateful letters. He wants to know, as others do, why he should not be allowed also to send parcels of food to Germany. In the controversy between Gollancz and Strachey the Minister makes the point that the turkeys and other extras we are getting at Christmas do not affect the crying need of Germany for cereals. But Gollancz replies, unanswerably, it seems to me, that when things are as bad as they are now in Germany, all food that is sent is likely to prevent someone or other from dying of hunger, or, more usually, from the diseases which are its result, and that the psychological effects of allowing people in Germany to know that we are not callous about their needs is in any case very important. If any of us wishes to share our points with hungry people of any nationality, it is wrong to prevent us. I expect the Government soon to give way in this matter.

* * *

It sometimes happens that our vices are rewarded. I had left David Mitrany's excellent *American Interpretations* far too late for review and read it this week-end. It was meant as a description of the origins and purpose of the New Deal, and to-day makes an admirable obituary notice. One chapter of especial interest deals with the American Labour movement and its chances of building a Third Party. So many of the reasons against a Third Party which he adduces—the chance of ruining Democratic prospects for a decade, the inevitable eight to twelve years in the wilderness for any new party—seem irrelevant to-day when liberals have lost the Democratic party and the Democrats have lost the country. The division of the Labour movement into A.F. of L. and C.I.O. of course remains, but Prof. Mitrany forecasts that a real threat to the whole New Deal structure would unite American Labour. Just such a threat seems to loom ahead unless the Republicans abandon the majority of their pre-election programme. I suppose that the two main obstacles which remain to-day are the diversity of the country, which makes it almost inevitable that a successful party should appeal to a far wider section of the population than can be united behind any one programme, and the lack of a leader who combines Henry Wallace's ideals with Jim Farley's organising ability and political know-how. American ideals which have been carried into political practice—the Square Deal, the New Freedom, the New Deal—have always rested on the firm foundation of patronage, city bosses, log-rolling, and door-bell ringing.

W. J. Turner, who died this week, was music critic of this journal from 1916 to 1940, and one of the small and brilliant group who brought in its early days a new voice to criticism. Not an academic critic, but an admirable, and usually controversial, journalist, Turner often evoked protest from the musicians; but he had the rare merit of stimulating interest among people who read no other musical criticism. He was never dull, and he brought the same revitalising ardour to his interest in the other arts. He approached them, indeed, with the first careless, unspoiled instinct of an artist, for until the end of his life he was a poet of fine ear and imagination. Turner was a man of impulsive, innocent, declamatory nature. He was dogmatic, but without knowing it, and without dryness. He loved argument, and his enthusiastic mind moved with an unpredictable idiosyncrasy which was the despair and the delight of his friends.

* * *

I see new advantages in joining the Oxford Movement. A friend of mine took a furnished flat, signed an agreement and paid over the money. The owner of the flat then informed him that he was an Oxford Grouper and that he had had Guidance not to let his flat. It was not worth while to take the matter to court, and my friend has not yet received any Guidance about where to live.

CRITIC

DENAZIFICATION

PARTITIONED by victorious Powers
The Nazi Reich dismembered lies;
The heart of Germany is ours
To educate and socialize.
Democracy will be secure
Within the graveyard of the Ruhr.

The masters of the master-race
Administer half-famished Zones,
And in the vanquished tyrant's place,
Strip off the flesh and pick the bones.
Each victor must fulfil his part—
We drain the life-blood from the heart.

With Germany disarmed and weak,
Her vital industries destroyed,
No Carthaginian peace we seek,
We shall democratize the void.
Humaner standards are applied—
Dead Germans are denazified.

We strive to wean them from the past,
However lost, however loath,
But in the Ruhr's perpetual fast
Democracy's a tardy growth,
And no such eager progress makes
But slow starvation overtakes.

Our interim achievement stands,
We keep starvation in control,
And if they perish upon our hands
As ordered famine takes its toll,
All are politically free
In death's supreme democracy.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to D. Wynn.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"It is not fair to expect youngsters to listen without fidgeting to long sermons on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. as well as to a short one at 9.30 a.m.," states the Rev. P. Mayhew, Vicar of St. Aidan's, Leeds, in appealing for a supply of clean thrillers for choir boys to read during sermons. —*The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury.*

Field-marshal Lord Alanbrooke, war-time chief of the Imperial General Staff, complained to-day of a tendency among some Dominion statesmen to place the interests of Uno above those of the British Commonwealth.—*Evening Standard.*

Little Theatre. First time in Nottingham. A new play by Jane Austen, the author of "Pride and Prejudice."—Advt. in *Nottingham Evening Post.*

The number of people with the tobacco craving is on the increase, and it includes Christians.—*Christian World.*

More than 3,000 members of the A.T.S. have been asked by the medical department of the War Office: "What have you done for your chilblains that makes them better?" The replies, states the *Lancet*, showed that more than 78 different remedies were used.—*Daily Telegraph.*

The assault took place in a Baker Street to Watford train, and it was said that ———, who was absent from the Army, had taken an energy tablet issued to Commando troops about to undergo severe strain.—*Evening Standard.*

My husband cut himself so severely in forcing open the children's money-box that he had to spend the contents on lint and bandages.—Wife at North Kent court.—*Evening News.*

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY IN EIRE

In July this year, the Irish Supreme Court declared that Part 3 of the Eire Trade Union Act (1941) was repugnant to the Constitution and was consequently invalid. Under this section, it was open to the Trade Union Tribunal, established under the Act, to give a trade union with its headquarters in Ireland the sole right of organising the workers in a given industry. No other union could compete for members or be established.

The first victim of this provision had been the Irish Women Workers' Union which, for many years, had had a section of its members engaged in the book-binding trade. Another union—catering for book-binders—applied for the sole right of organising workers in the trade, though it was by no means certain that they would take in women members. In fact, the women regarded this as a move to push them out of the industry. Yet the Trade Union Tribunal, on April 27, 1945, declared against the Women Workers' Union, which then lodged an appeal on the ground that Part 3 of the Trade Union Act was unconstitutional. Before the appeal could be heard, the National Union of Railwaymen was involved in a similar situation due to another union claiming the sole right to organise workers employed in road passenger services.

It was this latter case that was argued out in the Supreme Court last July, after the High Court had rejected the N.U.R. claim. It turned upon those clauses of the Eire Constitution which guarantee "Fundamental Rights," including freedom of expression, the right of assembly and the right "to form associations and unions." The case was argued by eminent Counsel and the five judges of the Supreme Court gave their decision against the Government, declaring that the section in question was illegal as it violated the right of citizens to join freely in trade unions, guaranteed in Article 40 of the Constitution. Costs were given against the Government. Although it was this appeal by the N.U.R. which decided the issue, it is important to remember that the Irish Women Workers' Union had a similar appeal pending. It is quite likely that the smaller union, with more slender means, could not have gone as far as the Supreme Court.

Those who wished to deprive Irish workers of the right to form or join a union of their own choice have spread a smoke screen around the issue to make it appear that it was a question of "English" versus "Irish" unions. But the only real issue was the liberty of the Irish workers to organise. And the attempt to squeeze Irish women workers out of an industry demonstrates beyond question the injustice of trying to use national feeling to cloak an attack on elementary liberty.

In presenting the N.U.R. appeal, Counsel declared that the only precedent he had been able to find for the offending section of the Trade Union Act was Mussolini's "Fascist Charter for the Workers." But while, undoubtedly, the anti-democratic virus was at work in this 1941 Trade Union Act, it is a good sign that the Eire Constitution safeguards fundamental democratic rights and that the judges of the Supreme Court were ready to deliver a judgment that has wiped out those offending and offensive clauses. These restrictive powers of Section 3 can only be re-imposed if the people are, by means of a referendum, prepared to amend the Constitution by deleting their right of freedom of association. The Government is hardly likely to initiate such a move.

How and why did this reactionary measure denying human liberty find its way to the Statute book? One strong motive was that of the rising Eire industrialists who wanted to curb the trade union movement and place it in leading strings. Added to this, apparently, was the feeling of certain trade union leaders that they could secure a monopoly of labour organisation even if this involved attacking Irish women workers. Thirdly, the Government interest in the matter would appear chiefly to have been concerned with cutting down the number of Labour organisations and stamping out militancy which might lead to strikes and industrial disputes.

The Eire Government then introduced a new Industrial Relations Act to take over—by means of Labour Courts—when the Wage Standstill Orders come to an end. Though Irish Labour is inclined to look kindly upon this Industrial Relations measure as a means of avoiding confusion in a time of industrial transition, it appears that unions may be called upon to pay heavy damages if they are held responsible for strikes against the decisions of these courts. The organised workers, moreover, have no right to legal representation in these Labour Courts, though this may on application be conceded. It is clear that the purposes of these Courts is to prevent strikes. Its first intervention was in a strike of Dublin railway carters.

While the subject of industrial relations is being considered it is not irrelevant to point out that 1,300 elementary school-teachers in Dublin were out on strike for over seven months. Eighty thousand children in the city were affected. Of these, 40,000 were receiving no education whatever. They were roaming the streets for months. The rest of the children were packed in classes with 50 per cent of the teaching staff available. Eire teachers have a strong case for salary increases based on cost-of-living figures, and they rejected a Government offer as inadequate before the strike. Attempts at mediation were made and the teachers were ready to negotiate. But the Government flatly refused to discuss any terms while the teachers were on strike. The teachers have now returned to the schools in reponse to an appeal by the Most Rev. Dr. McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, on behalf of the children.

R. M. Fox

THE MUFTI'S NEW ARMY

A new explosive is being added to Palestine's supercharged atmosphere. As you skirt the barbed wire and dodge the armoured cars that infest the Holy City you can see a profusion of uniforms, including the famous 6th Airborne, the kilts of a Highland outfit, the red shoulder-patches of General Anders' Poles and the tall Turkish-style hats of the Palestine Police. But in terms of the future the most interesting uniform to be seen is the plain khaki of two newly organised Arab para-military groups, the Nejada (Rescuers) and the Futuwa (Power). They pretend to be nothing more than older Boy Scouts, but hope to be the Arab answer to the Irgun and the Haganah.

The Futuwa and the Nejada together comprise less than 10,000 young men and are far inferior in numbers, organisation and training to the Irgun and Haganah. Therefore some minimise the importance of these groups as well as the "anti-Zionist boycott" which they have been supporting. But belief in the weakness of the Nejada and the Futuwa should have stopped at the end of September, when it became known that the two groups were being fused together in secret meetings at a well-guarded villa in Alexandria by none other than Haj Amin el Husseini, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem. These organisations are not only being amalgamated but are being tied in closer to the Arab Higher Executive Committee, which is headed by the Mufti. In his hands even a few thousand men can be extremely potent. He is reported to have had only 1,500 regulars at his disposal in the Arab Rebellion of 1936–39. When he moved into Iraq he had only a few aides with him, and within a few months helped produce the pro-Nazi uprising of Rashid Ali in May 1941 which threatened the entire Allied strategic position in the Middle East.

Any activities directed by the Mufti are likely to arouse Palestine's Jewish population to a pitch of fury. They know of his anti-Semitic incitement over the Axis radio during the war, including the 1944 broadcast in which he shrilled: "Arabs! Rise as one and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God, history and religion. This saves your honour. God is with you." The Hebrew press here has reported very extensively the discovery by the American Army in Germany of conclusive documentary evidence that the Mufti constantly goaded the leading Nazis with whom he was in touch to speed up the gas-chamber extermination of Jews in order to reduce the number who might want to migrate to Palestine. Therefore, for Palestinian Jews any group directed by the Mufti will evoke the sound and sight of frantically protesting people being herded toward their destruction in gas chambers.

Both Jews and Arabs here are more than suspicious about how the Nejada and the Futuwa came into being. The Nejada has existed for about a year, but only came out in the open six months ago, about the time the Mufti "escaped" from Paris. The Futuwa, headed by Jamal Husseini, the Mufti's nephew, was born shortly thereafter. Both have recruited and drilled openly in big cities and Arab villages up and down Palestine and have offered high positions and even paying jobs to leading Arabs. They make no secret of the fact that they have arms and are drilling with them. The members are given their uniforms free and wear them openly, though, in the Official Gazette of February 21st, 1946, the High Commissioner ordered that "No person shall, except under the authority of a written permit granted by the Inspector-General of Police, wear in public any distinctive dress or article of clothing or emblem, being a dress, article of clothing or emblem which indicates or purports to indicate that the wearer thereof belongs to any social or political organization." And these groups are definitely political organizations since they pledge allegiance to the Arab Higher Executive Committee.

In a recent press conference in Tel Aviv, Mr. Richard Stubbs, the British spokesman here, stated that the High Commissioner has decided not to apply at present that clause in the Defence Regulations concerning the wearing of uniforms, and that only uniforms "likely to be confused with those worn by members of His Majesty's forces" will be considered illegal.

When I reported this information to a well-known Arab lawyer in Jerusalem he smiled wrily and told me there were men still in prison who had been jailed in 1936 merely for possessing Boy Scout uniforms. I asked him why he thought the authorities were permitting the formation of the Nejada and the Futuwa. He replied emphatically: "There are three reasons: first,

to provoke Arab-Jewish conflict; second, to act as a check on Leftward developments among the Arabs, and third, to prepare Arab forces for an eventual war with Russia." He told me that as an old friend of the Mufti he was asked to join the Futuwa but had refused, saying: "If you really wanted to fight for Palestine's liberation you would be organising an underground army."

The suspicion that these organisations are being formed with the agreement, if not at the instigation, of the British authorities is based not only on British willingness to waive the ban on uniforms and ignore their possession of arms but also on the type of people involved. The Futuwa is directed by tall, hawk-faced Kamil Arekat, who is the son of an Arab police official and was himself an inspector in the C.I.D.—which everyone here refers to as "the Gestapo." He is said to have resigned from the C.I.D. before becoming commander of the Futuwa, but people here wonder why he finds it necessary to visit C.I.D. headquarters nearly every day.

The Futuwa's political sponsor is Jamal Husseini, the Mufti's nephew. When he was returned to Palestine by the British from his detention in Rhodesia he had hardly alighted from his plane before he began bitter attacks on the Zionists. Arab leaders noted that he was not attacking British policy as he once did, and in a series of conferences attempted to discover just what was his new line. At the end of these conferences his political prestige had sunk badly because most Arab leaders had concluded that he was only a slightly disguised salesman for an Anglo-Arab alliance. And this does not go down well, particularly among the younger generation of Arab nationalists who feel that British domination is an even more important enemy than Zionism. The suspicion of a British connection extends to the Mufti himself and a number of responsible Arabs subscribe to the belief that the authorities are preparing his return to Palestine as a safely anti-Soviet Arab leader when the time is ripe.

But the Mufti is much more adroit than Jamal Husseini and has not yet given any overt indication that he has come to an agreement with Britain. He still retains tens of thousands of fervent supporters in Palestine who may flock into the Nejada and the Futuwa if he gives the word. What is encouraging, however, is the degree of scepticism about the Mufti which exists among the younger, more educated Arab nationalists.

Jerusalem. ANDREW ROTH

PEOPLE: Wowsers

THE rich dialect of Aussie is the first thing to attract a visitor. It is neatly captured on the screen in *The Overlanders*. Most Digger slang is immediately comprehensible to the Pommy, as an abbreviated enrichment of crypto-cockney. But one word in Harry Watt's fine film, flung by Doc at Mac—who refuses to change course for the only inland pub—may puzzle you: "Wowser."

A "Wowser" seeks to interfere with or limit the pleasures of others. He is the most detested figure in Australia. Common types are the Grog Wowser, Sheila Wowser, Sunday Wowser, Cinewowser.

* * *

Here we are not so suspicious of others telling us what to do. Indeed the action so abused in Queensland comes from a sincere—if sometimes misguided—urge to improve other minds, generally those "below" you. This attitude has been the impetus to much social reform and cultural advance in Britain.

With the recent vast development and acceleration of central legislation affecting employment, incomes, home, health and education, individual reformism has dwindled. Wide-scale planning is now generally accepted. More and more is left to the State. But the great swing towards planning can cover so much ground so quickly that people may one day find that, while they have gained much physically, they have lost other things vital. And it is so tempting for the many who are now psychological shareholders in planning, to impose their own little ideas inside big plans. So much power is being placed in so few hands (for our common good), that it is right we be watchful, especially in regard to points of detail. It would be a disaster to rehouse a nation in lifeless, humourless Letchworths, where, incidentally, not one pub is permitted. The chief fear of Stevenage people is that the first satellite town, to be built there, should be like Letchworth up the road.

* * *

The future of the pub is a case in point. The Final Report (July, 1946) of The New Towns Committee (Chairman: Lord Reith) nervously approaches this humble dive: "We come now to the delicate, contentious and vital issue of licensing." It states:—

> It would be our wish to do anything in our power to discourage drinking as an end in itself or as *an escape from the realities and responsibilities of life.*

They consider every pub should serve tea and food (I suppose a person does not eat a sausage as an end in itself?); and that no pub should cover less than half an acre—death sentence on the classic British local. Any ignorant reader might think the corner pub a den of vice instead of the only surviving informal, open-to-anyone social centre of a whole, historic complex of *active* working-class interests—whist, angling, darts and bowls clubs; coursing, pigeon racing, canary shows and carnation contests, shove ha'penny, small business, courtship, vigorous argument, laughter—in some areas patronised by three-quarters of the population.

Are planners to decide what realities we should face, to adjudicate between Hollywood and Burton? Liberty to escape from "reality" is man's final privacy; without it life would be insupportably unromantic, futureless and featureless. Some like Beethoven; others prefer beer. You will not get people to drink one by messing about with the other.

The same attitude was revealed recently, when the Archbishop of Canterbury led a delegation to the Prime Minister in favour of restricting gambling. The day before, the Bishop of London launched a fierce attack on public morals and on the L.C.C. for allowing Sunday outdoor games. Similar assaults came from the No. 1 Anglican journalist, Rev. W. H. Elliott, and the No. 2 Anglican M.P., Skeffington-Lodge, who wants to stop cinema shows for children.

Britons have more than earned the right to be treated as adult. Nursery governesses are as out of date as gin palaces. We are old enough to drink (or not), smoke, read or worship, what we like, when and where we like, so long as we do not harm others. The will of one section is imposed in a democracy only when the welfare of all is involved. It is necessary for Government to allocate new houses and sites; they have no concern with the colour of curtains or young Fred's favourite fantasy.

It is particularly unfortunate that a wave of Wowserism should come from the Church of England, which is largely responsible for the present mess. It seems determined further to emphasise its lack of sympathy with common people. If preachers, planners, reformers, politicians could look forward and shape finer conceptions of hope and interest, we might ask something "better" of the shopgirl or apprentice. To try to bottle up betting is as silly as to try to bottle up petting. Only constructive, satisfying, positive alternatives can succeed.

Wowsers should study Grimsby, where for the first time an agreement on Sunday films has been amicably reached between church and cinema. Local parsons agreed:

> It is not part of our Christian duty to dictate to others what they should do with their leisure.

Nor is it any part of the duty of planners, politicians or publicans. When the British corner pub is forced to sell tea I shall quit—for Queensland.

TOM HARRISSON

A PAINTED CAVE

TRAVEL a hundred miles or so east from Bordeaux, and you find yourself in peculiarly agreeable country. Medieval castles perched upon cliffs command deep-cut, poplar-plumed valleys. The Dordogne and its tributary, the Vézère, intersect a high limestone tableland covered with oaks, stunted oaks, for the soil is poor; the roots engendering, paradoxical sign of their undernourishment, the truffle. The valley of the Vézère contains the most important concentration known to us of palæolithic remains. Man, who had developed ages earlier into a tool-using animal, here first reveals himself as an artist. A rock-shelter on a little property called Cro-Magnon at Les Eyzies has given its name to the race which, having probably migrated from North Africa, found in the caves and below the eroded cliffs of this valley ready shelter against the cold remaining from the last great glaciation. The amenities of the region had already been discovered by earlier and lower types of being. Mousterian man, whose remains are found in an area stretching from Britain to North Africa, from Spain to Asia Minor, takes his name from Moustier, close to Les Eyzies. Here, too, is the cave of La Mouthe, which first provided incontrovertible evidence that already in palæolithic times man was an artist. (The entrance to the gallery, containing engravings of animals and a sandstone lamp, had its entrance blocked before the Neolithic age.) Yet comparatively few English people know the Vézère country, and many of those who could be most interested in pre-history remain, strangely, unaware of its fascination. One meets highly educated people who fancy that the Stone Age men had to confront dinosaurs and pterodactyls!

The valley of the Vézère has now given up a new and extraordinary secret. In September, 1940, two schoolboys from the charming little town of Montignac, some twenty miles above Les Eyzies, were walking in a wood on a hill when their dog fell into a deep hole. Having climbed down to rescue it, they found the entrance to a cave, and on its walls a multitude of paintings. The teacher of classics in their school had talked to them of the prehistoric remains in the neighbourhood, and to him they came with the news of their adventure. Monsieur Laval—the name is far from uncommon—took a lamp and let himself down into the cave. That night, he told me, he did not sleep: "J'étais fou, j'étais fou, j'étais fou!" And no wonder. For the cave is decorated with scores of paintings in perfect preservation, some of them larger in scale than any other palæolithic pictures, and—what is more—they are the work of Aurignacians.

All the finest Stone Age paintings previously known are Magdalenian—that is to say, thousands of years later in date; for before the Magdalenians there were the Solutreans, who seem not to have practised painting, though they were the most adroit of tool-makers; and the Aurignacians, who preceded these, are the earliest people known to have painted. Though some of their engravings could be described as "quite good," these usually showed quadrupeds with only two legs; and their paintings also were very simple, silhouettes in monochrome. This judgment, however, has now to be revised. The Lascaux cave gives a new notion of Aurignacian art: though less detailed and realistic, some of its pictures are not inferior in either vigour or delicacy to the best Magdalenian work. The Abbé Breuil compares the Lascaux artists to the Fifteenth Century Italians, who preceded and prepared the way for Raphael and Michelangelo. Extending this analogy, let us suppose that nothing was known of Trecento and Quattrocento art except a few damaged works by the clumsiest followers of Giotto. Then suddenly somebody stumbles upon the Giottos at Padua or the Masaccios in Florence. Hardly less sensational than such a discovery was—so far as I understand—the revelation of Lascaux to the student of prehistoric painting. It reaffirms, moreover, according to the Abbé Breuil, the Magda-

lenian date of the Altamira pictures, which some experts have lately been giving to a later period.

But I have deviated into considerations outside my range. I am entirely without expert knowledge of pre-history: such smatterings as I possess come from reading books, already in part outdated, by such authorities as the Abbé Breuil, Mr. Burkitt, Mr. Sollas and Mr. Leakey. What I do know from a recent visit to the Lascaux cave is that to the inexpert eye it is incomparably richer and more rewarding than any of the other caves in the Vézère valley. It is not yet arranged for public visits, but Monsieur Laval, who is in charge of it, takes trouble to show it to anyone interested. Electric light has not yet been installed; and I found it all the more impressive to see the paintings, as did the artists who made them, by the light of a lamp. An easy entrance has been made to the cave, which is not very long. (The cave of Niaux in the Pyrenees runs a mile into the earth, and you have to penetrate for six hundred yards before coming to the first paintings.) The Lascaux cave consists of two passages joining in an oval chamber that has a high flat roof and is so nearly symmetrical as to give almost the illusion of a rude architecture. There are no signs of human habitation, and one supposes that the place was kept as a sanctuary to which dwellers in other caves came to make their magic. All round the walls of the chamber, all along the walls of the galleries, are animals—deer, cattle, bisons, horses, goats, often painted one on top of another and on very different scales. (One bull is seventeen feet long.) Then there is a mysterious composite beast with, apparently, the legs and tail of a rhinoceros, the head of a lion, and stretching in front of this two straight horns with brush-like ends. In a pit, some twenty-five feet deep, which I was unable to descend, is another enigma: a bison, its entrails hanging in a bag from a wound, stands between a prostrate, ithyphallic man and a woolly rhinoceros with upheld tail which appears to be excreting. Near the man is a bird-headed staff (which has been compared to funerary posts similarly adorned by the Indians in Vaucouver and Alaska). While the animals are naturalistically painted, the man is diagrammatic, and his head looks beaked. A spear is painted on the bison, but it is doubtful whether such a weapon could effect a disembowelling: is this then the work of the rhinoceros? One envies the experts the knowledge that enables them to speculate upon so stimulating a mystery.

The cave has some lions, engraved not painted, but no mammoths, and—what is very curious—no reindeer, though the paintings come from an epoch when reindeer were the commonest prey. The Abbé Breuil suggests indeed that they were so common that no magic was required to catch them, adducing as a parallel case the comparative rarity of fish in palæolithic art. The cows and mares shown are all pregnant, and while it is usually difficult to be certain that the animals are depicted in groups, there is a stallion following a mate in what seems a calculated proximity. Whereas palæolithic painters usually went ahead with their work with no regard for the pictures already there, we see a cow with its hind legs lifted (as if jumping a fence) to avoid a group of ponies depicted at an earlier date on a much smaller scale. The colours are black, yellow, brown and a rarely used purple; some of the pictures are in two colours; some are both engraved and painted. The styles vary: presumably magic was made here over an immense period of years. Some of the beasts are made in what is called the "*soufflé*" style, that is, by a series of blobs presumably blown on to the wall by the mouth or pipe. (Except for some outlines of hands, these are the earliest known examples of this technique.) Another notable trick is the leaving of an interval in the line of the further leg where it meets the body, which gives an effect of perspective. Antlers are shown in a twisted and untrue perspective that disappears in the later, Magdalenian style. Interspersed among the animals are mysterious symbols: things like palm-branches that may represent the feathered ends of arrows; and assemblies of rectangular shapes that may stand for traps—or, suggests the Abbé Breuil, for tribal marks, and he offers as an analogy Highland tartans.

Like all the caves in the neighbourhood Lascaux marks the site of what was a subterranean river. Being entirely below the level of the ground it is very cold, and the absence of warm air with resulting condensations has helped to keep most of the paintings in perfect preservation. Though the floor in one part is slippery with moisture as well as steep, the ceiling is dry, and there are no stalagmites and stalactites such as make the painted cave at Cabrerets so romantically numinous, not to say sinister. There has been, however, at Lascaux a certain amount of percolation through the walls, too little to spoil the pictures, but enough to granulate their surface with crystals and to provide anyone who examines closely with immediate proof of their great antiquity. Otherwise they look, most of them, as if they had been painted yesterday. It is staggering to realise that these deer with exquisitely branching antlers, these ponies Chinese in their sturdiness, these decisively silhouetted bulls, these cows with their velvety, as it were *pointillés*, muzzles, were painted thousands and thousands of years before man had learnt to plant crops or to breed animals.

That sympathetic magic is the only tenable explanation of the palæolithic wall-paintings, all experts, so far as I know, are agreed. For my part I believe that acute desire easily assumes the language first of prayer, then of command and even of identification. Sometimes the civilised find themselves slipping from the optative mood into the imperative, relapsing in fact into magical practices. "I want her" becomes successively "I must have her," "God, give me her," and, as it were giving orders to reality, "I am making her mine," "I am making her part of myself." *Graffiti* in lavatories uncover a similar obsession; and on walls of places frequented by jockeys, so a friend has pointed out to me, one sees the names of horses written up, not as tips but as overflowings of desire and hope. Men who had no food except berries and such beasts as they could catch may be supposed to have found in hunger an emotion at least as imperious as their successors now derive from horse-racing or from love. "Wishful writing" such scribbles may be called; and is not cave art in the same way wishful painting?

Engaging as may be such speculations, palæolithic painting impresses me even more as the first fruits of art than as the embryo of religion. For one thing, the Aurignacian as warlock must be presumed a being incomparably inferior to the saint and the mystic, while as artist he is much superior—or do my eyes deceive me?—to that other eminent animal-painter, the President of the Royal Academy. The Lascaux paintings are various in style as in merit, and though they are the work of the first race to have practised painting, they surely represent the later stages of a long evolution in accomplishment. The earliest visual art—if such it can be called—consists of engraved "meanders" or "macaroni," in which some have thought to see an imitation of the cave-bear's claw-marks. These, too, are Aurignacian, and mark a prodigious enlargement of human faculty: earlier creatures had been chipping flints into tools for some two thousand centuries without ever, it seems, conceiving the notion of making anything less directly and materially functional. But prodigious also is the development from the "meanders" to the magnificent beasts in the Lascaux cave. The Aurignacians, one concludes, were no less persevering than inventive, a people to be venerated perhaps as the earliest of our ancestors to deserve the name of men. And the ironic possibility struck me, as I gazed awestruck at the multitude of paintings at Lascaux, that these—the first consummate projections of human imagination and memory—might not impossibly survive all or almost all the visual art that since has so variously flowered. For they are underground, protected by some twenty feet of rock.

In September, 1940, little news percolated from France to this country, and neither then nor since have I seen any account of Lascaux in English, except in Mr. Brodrick's book *Cross-Channel*. The only authoritative description that has yet appeared in any language is an article in Spanish by the Abbé Breuil published, with illustrations, in Madrid in 1941. (Much of my information comes from this, but it does not appear to be in the library either of the British Museum or of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and I beg readers not to ask me to lend them a copy, for I do not possess one.) My excuse for writing, though with so little qualification, this article is that the Lascaux cave has captivated me, and that any readers who find their way there are likely to be similarly overwhelmed. If any of the experts in pre-history who have visited Lascaux should write in indignation to correct my grosser mistakes, their rebukes would be accepted not only with humility but with gratitude. For what I want is a lot of further and better information about pictures that I cannot get out of my mind.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

The Arts and Entertainment

BALLET

ONE was reminded by *Les Sirènes*, Frederick Ashton's latest production at Covent Garden, that a parody of vulgarity is difficult to differentiate from the real thing. Either my sense of humour was at fault or this burlesque of a swell Variety show has not quite succeeded in the task. It was perhaps natural that to transatlantic Cecil Beaton the difference between the Royal Opera House and the Hippodrome should have become a little blurred; but the two genial collaborators of *Wedding Bouquet*—most delightful and witty of ballets—seemed also not quite sure of their platform. Nothing was missing from a first-class Variety: vulgarised mermaids, sophisticated sea-birds, an authentic Edwardian fashion display, an oriental monarch, balloon, motor-car, bathers, cardboard waves pushed on and off by muscular swimming instructors, and capped by mechanically toppling crests. Choreography, even Frederick Ashton's, was rather cramped by so much authenticity. When, as the Eastern potentate, he entered from the wings on the second night, instead of making a solemn descent in the balloon, one hoped he had traded this pleasure against Helpmann's song, which was really past a joke. But no; Helpmann descended blowing kisses and sang as well. Ashton's grave burlesque dance as the Shah, Pasha or King was exquisitely funny, and Margot Fonteyn as the Spanish dance star was brilliant. The bathers were more tedious than funny, except for one remarkable diving turn. What did the sea-gulls stand for? They were evidently well interpreted by Margaret Dale and Alexis Rassine, but it was a shame to make them as vulgar as the humans. I should have liked to see La Bolera's lost pearl necklace returned by them to its native element, the oyster, instead of hung round the too fashionable neck of a mincing bird. The aqueous overture was delightful, but Lord Berners's wit also suffered a certain eclipse under so many appurtenances. *Les Sirènes* was rapturously received, and Christmas is coming!

In the absence of a libretto one was free to give one's own interpretation to Walter Gore's *Concerto Burlesco* at the Ballet Rambert, King's Theatre, Hammersmith. My companion took the young man with eye-shade, John Gilpin, who dominated the fourfold pianist, for an existentialist, whose plunge into existence set him above the *routinier* performers on the grand piano. Sally Gilmour was excellent as Hysteria, but the ballet seemed to be still in the rehearsal stage, and I am incapable of judging of its merits after one pre-view. I am less confident than some critics that Anthony Burke's *Vagabonds* at Sadler's Wells is valueless as a ballet. His work, though turgid, has the merit of sincerity, and he

shows a sense of grouping and dynamism which are not banal. But *Dante Sonata* is a dangerous model for a young choreographer who has no long training in classical tradition. Ireland's music made an interesting background. The lighting and *decor* (by Vivienne Kernot) were striking. Alan Carter's arrangement of Bartok's beautiful Rumanian dances, which he calls *The Catch*, is a vulgar little work. It was danced with great agility by the choreographer, Joan Harris and Frank Ward.

Façade is not new, but with Alan Carter as the Dago it touched a new level of vulgarity. It was ecstatically received. BERYL DE ZOETE

THE MOVIES

"The Dark Mirror," at the Odeon, Marble Arch

"The Killers," at the Gaumont

"Day of Wrath," at the Academy (from Saturday)

Two thrillers from an expert hand: that of Mr. Robert Siodmak, whose *Spiral Staircase* captured, if it did not exhilarate, many. This hand, as one gathers from the new pieces, is capable of various touches. In *The Dark Mirror*—before releasing us to blow our noses or trapes off to dinner—it exerts a slow, soft strangulation; while *The Killers* magnificently kills in twenty minutes and leaves us ghosts the remaining hour and a half. The first (as thrillers go) sustains; the second drops into anticlimax. Since tension and nothing else, tension achieved by whatever means, fair or foul, is the beginning, middle and end of thrillers, there is no need to insist which is the better film. Go to *The Dark Mirror*: go or not, as you please, to *The Killers*. Apart from this all-important difference of tension, the workmanship in both is excellent.

I don't know that *The Dark Mirror* started with any advantage. Identical twins, even treated psychologically, can hardly escape the old steeplechase of doubles; and on the screen there is the added fence of one actor or actress taking two parts. Will they shake hands? All such distractions, of course, fatally lower tension, and goodbye to our thriller. *The Dark Mirror* takes this second fence in its stride (only at one moment, and then not annoyingly, do the two Miss de Havillands tease our sense of illusion), while the worst one can say of the whole situation is that it rings too often the changes of confusion. The psychology, it is true, won't bear analysis: we are asked to believe that, of identical sisters living together, one can become a man-eating tiger, the other a daisy—well, believe it if you like. The success of the piece depends, however, not on psychological depth, but on dramatic effect; and when we discover one sister (paranoiac) trying to drive the other mad so as to take her place, there can be no doubt of our strung fascination. The delicate duplicity that has gone before attains here a harsher irony, tinged by the mania of seeing face next to face, form leaning over form. There is some subtle play with table-mirrors, giving us at moments the same features in triplicate. Miss de Havilland's stand the ordeal well. Add to this the threats of violence, expert photography, Thomas Mitchell's police inspector, and you have all the ingredients of an unusual thriller.

The Killers deals perfectly, in its opening sequences, with the Hemingway story it is taken from: hold-up and murder by two strangers in a small town. Every second of this action is loaded. The rest of the film then tries to explain how the killing has come about, in terms not of Hemingway, but of watered Hammett. Moral: don't, if you start with murder, elaborate it too vividly or detection may prove a bore.

Stop press! Carl Dreyer, whose *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* triumphs in the memory after eighteen years, has made a companion-piece in Denmark which will be showing at the Academy on Saturday. It deals with witch-hunting in the seventeenth century, and comes from a Norwegian novel *Anne Pedersdotter*, which was seen in a rather wooden stage-version at the Arts Theatre a couple of years ago. The film, which I shall deal with next week, is a masterpiece, no less. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE GALLERIES

MUCH as I want to talk about the one-man show at Tooth's with which Mr. Geoffrey Tibble places himself among the best of our living English painters, I think that I must this week place a word about the current controversy on the cleaning of old pictures. A painter has suggested that this journal should print two articles giving respectively the points of view of "the Artist" and "the Curator." But, alas! artists, like curators, are not in agreement, though most of those to whom I have talked look at the matter as I do. Almost all generalisations, moreover, are dangerous; for pictures may be cleaned well or badly, and thoroughly or partially. Again, they may be not only cleaned but "restored," which is a different thing, though often desirable.

It seems reasonable, however, to lay down one rule: we want to see a picture looking as much as possible as it did when it left the artist's studio—or rather when it was given its first coat of varnish. From this it follows that all pictures which have been varnished must periodically be cleaned, since with time varnish always becomes discoloured. In fact, almost all 16th and 17th century paintings of any importance have already been cleaned more than once, and usually for the first time before they were a hundred years old. To leave pictures covered as it were with a layer of *consommé en gelée* is little better than hiding them in vaults. Most of the Poussins and Watteaus in the Louvre, for instance, now look as if they had been painted in monochrome; two of the three Claudes in the King's collection may be very beautiful, probably are, but most of their beauty is effectively shrouded; and who would guess from the Veroneses in the National Gallery that their maker was an unsurpassed colourist?

Why then all these protests against cleaning? If I were a Royal Academician, I might perhaps hope that time would be allowed to embellish my works with kindly dirt. But, of course, no such excess of humility is responsible for any of these cross letters. It is rather that people become so fond of particular pictures that they cannot bear to see them changed, even for the better. If you have been brought up in a Georgian house to which has been added a Victorian conservatory, the removal of this disfigurement may be very painful to you. Similarly, some painters are dismayed at the disappearance of 18th or 19th century additions to a favourite Rembrandt.

But there is a further and less sympathetic motive for complaint. Most great works of art are apt to disconcert by their vitality and originality. Look at the Poussin "Bacchanale" in the National Gallery; it now gives one a shock, for it is a revelation. To many worthy souls a masterpiece becomes bearable or at least likeable only when dirt and discoloration have blunted its impact. Was not the great Bentley at pains to amend all the subtle variations in Milton's blank verse? And Rimsky-Korsakov smoothed away Mussorgsky's harmonic audacities. In his protest against recent National Gallery cleanings the President of the Royal Academy revealed his attitude with his customary candour. A visitor to the Gallery, he feared, "might imagine or detect a savour of Klee in some of the surface qualities of the large Koninck landscape . . . and even of Cézanne in the newly restored and raw-looking 'cornfield' by Constable." The Old Masters, in fact, are discovered to possess the same vital characteristics as those wicked "moderns." Could the cat be more handsomely let out of the bag?

I am not now maintaining that all pictures can stand a cleaning that is thorough. Some may have been so badly cleaned in the past that thorough cleaning would make the irretrievable damage too painfully apparent. Others, if the repaints were removed, would reveal

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JONATHAN CAPE

empty patches. In such cases, indeed, a modern restorer could most probably make a better job than his predecessors. But the first rule to observe is that what the artist painted, however sketchily, must always be better worth seeing than any improvements attempted by a lesser hand.

None of those who protest against the recent cleanings would, I presume, admit that they preferred pictures to be deadened by brown varnish. But I suspect that, quite unconsciously, they do. And a quotation from the *Life of Constable* is most relevant.

> Sir George (Beaumont) had placed a small landscape by Gaspar Poussin on his easel, close to a picture he was painting, and said, "Now, if I can match these tints I am sure to be right." "But suppose, Sir George," said Constable, "Gaspar should rise from his grave, do you think he would know his own picture in its present state? Or if he did, should we not find it difficult to persuade him that somebody had not smeared tar or cart-grease over its surface, and then wiped it imperfectly off."

The impoverishment caused to our enjoyment by "smeared tar or cart-grease" can hardly be exaggerated. Fortunately the Louvre has at last begun to clean a few of its pictures with magnificent results. The Trustees and Directors of the National Gallery have during this century earned the gratitude, in my opinion, of everyone who cares deeply for painting. I wish only that they would show some of the next pictures to be cleaned with the varnish removed from only one half of the canvas. I think that the results would convince all save those who find masterpieces distasteful.

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

MR. MACNEICE'S mild and dignified protest at my somewhat violent reaction to his latest broadcast, justifies, no doubt, the *intention* of the dramatic method he adopted in *The Careerist*; but I do not think it dispels—as merely my fault—the confused impression this ingenious experiment made upon me. Perhaps the doubling of the chorus by music had something to do with my discomfort (it was not boredom); but, listening to the programme again last week, I experienced just the same difficulty in forming a clear and coherent picture of the action at any given moment. Although the very last person to consider lyrical language, fantasy, or allegory "antiquated and undramatic," I do venture to think that complexity of *texture* is a very dangerous thing in radio. It is not merely the ear, but the inner eye, that must follow the persons of the play, although these may—indeed must—be freely imagined according to the listener's temperament. This freedom is the central beauty of radio; but if it is abused, atomisation occurs and the sense of outline and form disappears. It is in the nature of broadcasting that the listener cannot distinguish clearly more than three acoustic levels or planes, corresponding to the three visual planes in a picture; and these levels must be kept distinct. My quarrel with Mr. MacNeice, on this occasion, is that he took too little care of the perspective of his symbolic voices, with the result that they soon lost the unique significance each was intended to have—and had to preserve, if the idea was to be successfully communicated.

Miss Rose Macaulay's thoughtful appraisal of E. M. Forster, in the "Living Writers" series, suggested to me that, wherever possible, amateur broadcasters should avoid giving themselves continuous speeches of more than quite modest length. The one-man talk cannot, of course, get round this difficulty; but where quotations, spoken by other voices, are included, it is to the speaker's—as well as the listener's—advantage to "ventilate" the script as much as possible. Broadcasting in the same series the week before, I made the mistake of writing huge chunks of narration for myself, with the result that my meagre vocal resources gave out long before the end of each passage; whereas Miss Macaulay, who avoided this mistake, gave no signs of fatigue or monotony.

The repetition of "How to Listen" was an admirable example of the advantages of editing—especially in the case of Features and other programmes of an improvisatory nature. The first edition was diffuse and contained too many short sequences, some of them ineffective; in the second edition all the dead wood was cut out, so that both the humour and the argument were greatly enhanced. In its final form this programme deserves to be rebroadcast at regular intervals, for it neatly includes all the answers to the people who complain that radio fails to give them what they expect of it.

I want to draw readers' attention to a brochure entitled "Your Broadcast Music," which is obtainable gratis from the B.B.C. The first number of this well-planned and agreeably presented booklet covers the whole schedule of concerts of all kinds from October to December, 1946, and further numbers will presumably be issued quarterly. This publication enables musical people to plan their listening far in advance, and gives besides a valuable insight into the general scheme proposed by the Music Department. There are also separate paragraphs devoted to the Third Programme, Music Talks, and music in the various regions. Regarded as a mere three months' schedule, the extent of musical ground covered is impressive.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Correspondence

CONSCRIPTION

SIR,—As the Generals know they will get their men anyhow, there is a feeling about that the urge to improve Servicemen's conditions will vanish. Knowing the record of the Labour Ministers in the Service Ministries I do not believe that; on the contrary, this is the most favourable moment for years to press for substantial reforms.

I suggest five matters on which we should concentrate. Firstly, officers' recruitment. The structure of the Forces throws into sharper focus the rigid class divisions of our civilian society and many men became fully aware for the first time how much privilege and rank can mean. There is no chance of fundamentally democratic Armed Forces until our civilian class structure is much more fluid, but we can make a start in the Services. Let us then make it a condition that all officers shall be recruited from the best soldiers in the ranks. That will mean a radical overhaul of the Dartmouth system for Naval officers, the selection of Guards officers and the fiction that results from "planting" intended officers in men's training establishments for a few months, knowing beforehand that they will be commissioned at the end of it.

Secondly, let us establish machinery for collective representation of grievances and suggestions. What is there "dangerous" in a responsible group of men in constant contact with both commander and the men themselves acting as a funnel for representations, and conversely as a medium of information? Does it not happen that the irritation that is general to a unit often goes unremedied and even unrecognised and certainly unexplained because it is nobody's business to bring it to the C.O.'s notice? I am certain that the serving man's sense of responsibility is such that the machinery I propose would help the C.O., whilst removing from the men that individual sense of helplessness in the face of seemingly arbitrary actions and decisions that prejudice so many against army life.

Thirdly, I propose a Standing Parliamentary Committee with the duty of exercising a constant watch over Service conditions to make sure that they march in step with changing circumstances. The constitutional responsibility of Service Ministers would remain, but the fiction that they can be expected to know everything that is going on in their Services would be ended. At the moment, Members of Parliament act as a kind of unofficial shop stewards

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for the Forces' problems, and only last week Mr. Bellenger said about Tom Driberg: "Now he has brought this question (colour bar) to my notice, I will have it looked into." But M.P.s are necessarily passive recipients of information and troubles. I want my Standing Parliamentary Committee to go out looking for trouble before it arises.

Fourthly, it is time there was a complete overhaul of the King's Regulations—revised by nineteenth-century Blimps for eighteenth-century convicts: and of the Regulations governing the County Territorial Associations—at present the resting homes of retired Colonels and Lords-Lieutenant of the Counties. The proper people to administer Territorial Associations are those who represent the main streams of life from which the recruits will come, for example, local authority delegates, trade unionists, and other representatives of civic life, together with the War Office's own representatives.

Fifthly, and this is more intangible, the serving man must feel that the Army is adding something to his life to compensate for the period it takes away—increased knowledge of his trade, widened horizons of understanding, a sense of citizenship—anything that will make him feel at the end of his service, "Well, it wasn't a dead loss, and I'm glad I went through with it."

During the next few weeks I suggest we all concentrate on this 5-Point Charter and if we can establish it we shall have squeezed some good out of Conscription.

JAMES CALLAGHAN

House of Commons.

AGE AND SERVICE

SIR,—It is certainly good to know, after reading the Prime Minister's recent announcement on the question of the rate of demobilisation from the Army, that new recruits will only have to serve for a period of eighteen months.

But what of the men who have been in the Service for years and who have seen active service, too? They are told that, if they joined His Majesty's Forces before January 1944, they can hope to be demobilised some time before the end of 1947; if they joined before January 1947, they will not be restored to civilian life until before the end of 1948.

In fact, if the recent suggested programme is carried out, it is possible that men who have been serving since January 1945 will not be released until *after* those who are recruited at the beginning of 1947!

There seems to me to be a grave unfairness here. Would it not be possible to revise these dates in order to make the length of service for the men who have been in the Army for years already more comparable with that of newly-recruited men? For instance, in the Navy at the present time the length of service is about 2½ years for officers and men. Could not this arrangement apply to the Army, also?

GERTRUDE BERNSTOCK

20 Leabourne Road,
Stamford Hill, N.16.

SUDAN AND EGYPT

SIR,—The article in your issue of November 2nd, entitled "The Unity of the Nile," contains some instructive geographical points, but I cannot help feeling that it is somewhat misleading politically.

This is mainly because your correspondent seems to have misinterpreted the slogan of "Unity of the Nile Valley" which is put forward by the Sudanese and Egyptian National Movements alike. So far as we of the Sudan Congress are concerned (and I hope to demonstrate in a moment that we have the overwhelming support of the Sudanese people) the issue in the Nile Valley is this: are we to remain backward colonial countries, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the British, or are we to emerge from this subjection by means of our own concerted struggle? For the Sudan we desire neither British nor Egyptian domination—but we can see clearly that the one issue at stake at present is British rule, not Egyptian, for Egypt itself is a subject country struggling to free itself. We therefore regard it as ordinary common sense to unite with the Egyptians both in the struggle for liberation of our two nations and for the work of construction that will follow. We believe that this unity must take some constitutional form, and the formula we have suggested is that of an autonomous Sudan, with complete Sudanese control of the administration, linked with Egypt by a common Army, a common foreign policy and a common Crown. Under these circumstances the regime of the Sudan could hardly be said to be dependent upon Egypt.

Your correspondent presents the fundamental misconception of Britain and Egypt as equal sovereign states viv-a-vis the Sudan, when he speaks of "we cannot be said to have tackled the basic problems of illiteracy and poverty. . . . But neither have the Egyptians . . ." This ignores the fact that Egypt is basically a country of colonial status no less than the Sudan, and that she is by no means free to embark on tackling of basic problems, either in the Sudan or on her own territory. Egypt will be free to do this only when her semi-colonial status has ended. If her affairs are dominated by vested interests, who puts the vested interests there? Not the Egyptian people.

It is not true that "The number of Sudanese who can appreciate the implications of Nile Valley Unity . . . constitutes only a small fraction . . ." The Cairo "Al Ahram" recently reported the Sudan Congress as having some 220,000 active supporters. Congress parties, notably the "Ashigga" which outlined the above policy on Nile Valley unity, have gained election by large majorities at recent municipal elections.

Why did our Congress gain the support of the people? Perhaps because we, in fact, did set about "tackling the basic problems of illiteracy and poverty," etc. It is a simple fact that since the Congress began to raise its education fund in 1941, we have built more schools in five years than the Government has built in 48. The record is: Congress, nineteen intermediate schools, two secondary schools; Government, twelve intermediate, two secondary, one university college.

Another aspect on which your correspondent does not touch is the utter backwardness of the southern Sudan, where it is true to say that Government has done practically nothing in social welfare, health or education, and the people are still living in the most primitive forms of barbarism. Government rigidly separates the pagan, African South from the Islamic, Arabic-speaking North under the pretext of "protecting" the Southerners. It would be an ingenious power indeed that could protect these unhappy people from a fate worse than what they are already suffering, and have suffered for so long. Perhaps we can be pardoned for having cynical thoughts of "divide-and-rule," and for smiling at the statement that real unity is achieved under the British. Unity of things, perhaps. But we are more concerned about people than things.

The question of economic co-operation between Nile States is something that can be decided better by common agreement of free peoples than by arbitrary Imperial decree. The above, briefly, are the reasons why we do not feel that "the Sudanese stand to gain the most by maintaining the British connection."

ISMAIL EL AZHARI
President, Sudan Graduates' General Congress.
Leader, Sudanese Delegation on the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.
25 Lowndes Square,
S.W.1.

PALESTINE PARTITION

SIR,—In his article "A Return to Sanity," Mr Crossman asserts that if Great Britain and America imposed a policy of partition in Palestine the Arabs would confine themselves to verbal protests, particularly if they were bribed with American dollars for economic development. Has he any evidence for this statement, or does he make it simply because it fits neatly into his system of ideas? Do the "Arab

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moderates" to whom he refers as willing to make concessions really exist, or are they creatures of his too luxuriant imagination? It is of course convenient for one who advocates a policy of partial or total concession to the Zionists to be able to believe that this policy will involve no bad consequences.

Mr. Crossman was in the Arab world for too short a time to see anything more than he wanted to. It is clear, however, to all skilled observers of the Arab scene that the attempt to impose partition in Palestine would lead to an immediate and violent Arab revolt which would have the active support of all classes in the Arab world, moderates and extremists, young and old, peasants, workers and landowners alike. It is clear also that the political problem cannot be side-tracked by economic measures; the growing Left-Wing movements in the Arab countries are no less opposed to Zionism than other sections of the population. If this is true, as I know it to be, would Mr. Crossman still advocate this policy? If he prefers Zionist to Arab friendship, that is of course his own concern. But he should not delude himself and others into believing that the choice need not be made.

A. H. HOURANI

The Arab Office, 92 Eaton Place, London, S.W.1.

BILSTON COMMUNITIES

SIR,—In your issue of Nov. 16 you give me credit for working with the late Dr. Otto Neurath, the Viennese sociologist, in the little black country borough of Bilston and of building up there with him a series of small communities with various communal advantages. This is certainly being done but unfortunately I never met, and in my ignorance had heard very little of, Dr. Neurath before I went to Bilston though we seem to have been thinking on much the same lines. To Bilston is due the credit of calling him in and to him the credit of saying that what it needed, like indeed every other English town, was greater communal life. He analysed the town and applied his well known isotypes to the result but made no definite plan for it. After his death the then Town Clerk, Mr. A. V. Williams, who is far more of a sociologist than town clerks generally are, saw in a technical journal a plan of mine for a dormitory village for Birkenhead built up with a series of oval greens surrounded by houses and the greens themselves radiating like the petals of a flower from a club house, which seemed to offer somewhat similar communal advantages to those Dr. Neurath had prescribed. This is how there are to-day ten such communities in various stages of formation at Bilston and, now that Mr. Williams has moved there and become its Town Clerk, two more at Dudley. To him and to the courage of these two towns and their councillors must go the credit therefore for actually starting such work in this country. To draw it on paper, as I have done, or even to go further and out of the blue describe in detail the sort of life such plans may lead to, as Mr. Lawrence Wolfe did in his book "The Reilly Plan, a new way of life," when he too saw my Birkenhead work, is comparatively easy. My hope, however far-fetched it may sound, is that as Bilston by making two hundred years ago Watt's first steam engine can be said to have started the Industrial Revolution which went round the world, so Bilston may also be said a century or two hence to have started a social revolution which travelled as far and to some extent offered an amelioration of the former.

CHARLES REILLY.

SHOE LEATHER

SIR,—"Critic's" critical faculty must have been soundly asleep when he allowed his friend in the shoe trade to lead him so far astray in your issue of November 9th as to the causes of the footwear shortage.

(*a*) It is untrue that the Germans had "a virtual monopoly of quality-leathers for uppers." The report of the Boot and Shoe Working Party, referring to the pre-war position, states that the quality of the best grades of British calf and kid leathers had been brought up to standards comparable with the American and European productions. It is true that the report adds that British prices were higher, overlooking the fact that German exports were subsidised and German upper leather was exported at below the cost of production—sometimes even below the cost of the raw material.

(*b*) It is not only untrue but absurd to say that the Italians had a monopoly of sound leather for soles. Reference to the Census of Production, 1935, shows that over 95 per cent. of home market requirements in sole leather were supplied by British tanners, and reference to the statistics of imports makes it clear that Italy's share of the imports of sole leather into this country was very small indeed. Those who know the facts about the Italian production of sole leather can only wonder on what evidence "Critic's" friend bases his high opinion of its quality.

(*c*) So far from Argentine hides being unsuitable for sole leather, the Argentine for many years has been our most important source of supply of imported hides for sole leather. The statement that the biological characteristics of Argentine hides make them unsuitable is without scientific foundation. The bulk of the production of the British Army boot—widely recognised as the soundest of its kind in the world—has been soled with leather from Argentine hides, all tanned in this country.

A. M. SOUTHALL,
United Tanners' Federation. *Secretary*

SPAIN

SIR,—Mrs. Nan Green was evidently attempting in your last issue to show that I was "wholly satisfied" with the Spanish regime, by quoting from reports of my Press interview in Madrid. Any impartial observer will agree that the quoted extracts demonstrate nothing of the sort, despite the faulty translations. Incidentally the sentence: "It would be disloyal on my part to want to find the same system here as there is in my country," should read, properly translated: "It would not be reasonable for me to expect to find here the same system as in my country"—which is what I said. The Madrid correspondents reported, on the whole, very accurately.

I must call attention to the fact that Mrs. Green uses the well-worn device of omitting quotations which do not support her argument. For instance, she will have observed, in the *Arriba* report, that I adversely criticised the slowness of legal processes in Spain, which often leave a prisoner many months in gaol before he receives judgment. Apart from anything else, this in itself disposes of the suggestion that I was "wholly satisfied" with the regime.

House of Commons. RONALD CHAMBERLAIN

[This correspondence is now closed.]

"A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED?"

SIR,—In Mr. Betjeman's review under the above heading (October 19th), the good name of Crittall, which it is my business to protect, seems to be used in a derogatory sense.

Here is the sentence:—

"True, a late Georgian farmhouse, all plainness and proportion and function, is a joy to look at in any landscape, but a prefab. house equally functional and by Crittall standards as well-proportioned, looks awful nearly everywhere."

What justification has your reviewer for supposing that the proportions of a pre-fabricated house give us æsthetic satisfaction?

We are, I think, entitled to a public acquittal from the dock in which Mr. Betjeman has placed us.

Crittall Manufacturing Co., Ltd. F. P. WALKER

[Our reviewer did not intend to imply anything derogatory to the Crittall Manufacturing Company. Their name was used because, like that of Corbusier or Gropius, it is so closely associated with modern or "functional" developments in architectural style. —ED., *N.S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"PHILOSOPHY," says Russell, "from the earliest times has been . . . an integral part of the life of the community, and as such I have tried to consider it."* His interest lies more particularly in the reciprocal relation between circumstance and thought, since while "the circumstances of men's lives do much to determine their philosophy . . . their philosophy does much to determine their circumstances." Thus, philosophy is at once the prop and the mirror of circumstance. If we are to understand an age, we must understand its philosophy, and to do this "we must ourselves be in some degree philosophers."

The angle of approach determines both the form and the contents of a book whose distinctive purpose is to present the thought of philosophers in the setting of their times. In addition to the familiar contents of a History of Philosophy, the chapters on Plato and Aristotle, on Hume and Kant, there are linking passages of historical outline designed to throw into high relief those events that appear "to have had most influence on philosophical thought." The method yields some interesting results. The subjectivism of much modern thought is linked with the decline of the authority of the Catholic Church and the rise of Protestantism: "Truth was no longer to be ascertained by consulting authority—but by inward meditation"; the growth of Cynicism and Stoicism in the fourth and third centuries B.C. with the decline of the City State and the loss of political power, which led philosophers to turn away from politics and to devote themselves "to the problem of individual virtue or salvation," while the mystical philosophy of the Neo-Platonists and later of St. Augustine is seen against the background of ages of violence which made men despair of practical affairs and aspire after "the Other World" as "alone worthy of allegiance."

The work is a monument of learning and a testimony to love; for, in spite of Russell's scepticism in regard to metaphysics (of which more in a moment), it is hard to believe that the immense amount of reading and thinking which the preparation of this work must have entailed could have been devoted to the history of a subject of whose worth-whileness the author was not passionately convinced.

It is written with clarity and grace, irradiated by those incidental flashes of humour and sharpened by those little cat-like touches of malicious wit by which the reader of Russell is perpetually delighted. Russell is one of the few writers who has known how to apply wit to philosophy; but his wit is of a peculiar kind, deriving less from the appositeness of verbal connections than from the logical drive of his thought seeking expression. A good example is the equation between the terms of St. Augustine's and the Marxist philosophies, beginning Yahweh = Dialectical Materialism, The Messiah = Marxism, The Elect = The Proletariat and proceeding through The Second Coming = The Revolution to Hell = Punishment of the Capitalists. The modern reader is, of course, diverted by a contemplation of the intellectual follies of great men from which he also derives an agreeable feeling of superiority. "No doubt," he says to himself—unless, of course, he is crassly arrogant, "my own views will seem equally absurd to posterity, but meanwhile I cannot but feel a tolerant amusement when I read that Aristotle thought that 'children should be conceived in winter when the wind is in the north' and that 'obscenity is never to be tolerated, except in temples where the law permits even ribaldry.'"

Russell is wholly unable to resist the temptation to regale us with such intellectual tit-bits. He enjoys presenting Pythagoras as a combination of Einstein and Mrs Eddy, dwelling on Aquinas's tortuous speculations as to what happens at the resurrection of the body to "a man who never, throughout his life, ate anything but human flesh and whose parents did likewise," or explaining objections to brother-sister incest on the ground that "if the love of husband and wife were combined with that of brother and sister, mutual attraction would be so strong as to cause unduly frequent intercourse." And then, quite suddenly, we come on some passage of superb prose or weighty judgment, as for example, the following on the intellectual preoccupations of St. Jerome and St. Augustine:—

> It is strange that the last men of intellectual eminence before the dark ages were concerned, not with saving civilisation or expelling the barbarians or reforming the abuses of the administration, but with preaching the merit of virginity and the damnation of unbaptized infants. Seeing that these were the preoccupations that the Church handed on to the converted barbarians, it is no wonder that the succeeding age surpassed almost all other fully historical periods in cruelty and superstition.

It is rash to criticise Russell. I venture, however, to cite one point of general difficulty. Russell has an interesting definition of philosophy as a No Man's Land lying between theology and science. "All *definite* knowledge belongs to science; all *dogma* as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology," and cannot, therefore, presumably be known to be true. Philosophy is like theology in that it is concerned with matters on which knowledge is, or at least so far has been, unascertainable; it is like science in appealing to reason and not to authority. We are, however, encouraged to study it partly because, although science alone gives knowledge, "what we can know is little, and if we forget how much we cannot know we become insensitive to many things of very great importance." It follows that there is no knowledge of absolute values, of truth, of goodness, and of beauty; and if, indeed, there are such values embedded, as it were, in the structure of the universe, then it is clear, we cannot, on Russell's view, know them. Indeed, one of the reasons why he denies *knowledge* to philosophy is that it is *of* these absolutes that much philosophy has traditionally been regarded as the knowledge, or at any rate, as the attempted knowledge; but if there are no such things, if the universe does not contain an independent moral order or an objective truth, philosophy, it is clear, cannot tell us about them.

In illustration of this general attitude, take Russell's treatment of Aristotle's *Ethics*. There are, he says, three questions we can ask about a system of Ethics: (i) Is it internally consistent? (ii) Is it consistent with the author's views on other subjects? (iii) Is its answer to ethical questions such as are "consonant to our own ethical feelings"? If the author offends on the first two counts he is guilty of intellectual error; if on the third, we cannot say that he is wrong but only "that we do not like him." In other words, ethics is not an objective study; it does not give us information about a moral order subsisting independently of ourselves which we may rightly or wrongly discern, or which we may rightly discern but neglect. Hence we cannot meaningfully ask of an ethical system, is it *true*; and differences in regard to ethical questions reduce themselves to matters of taste. Now, Russell does not *like* Aristotle. He holds that "to a man with any depth of feeling," Aristotle is "likely to be repulsive" since, "all the more profound aspects of the moral life are apparently unknown to him."

This, on the surface is admittedly an expression of taste. But what, one wants to know, are "the more profound aspects of the moral life," or what he terms "the sphere of human experience with which religion is concerned"? Is not this to slip in by the back door the values which have been officially extruded through the front? The universe apparently has a moral structure after all; it may even have a basis in religion. Men of profound insight may divine the one and in religious experience commune with the other. Aristotle, not being profound and having no religious experience, does not succeed in telling us what the universe in its *deeper nature* is like. Is not that what Russell is, in effect, saying in criticism of Aristotle? I don't agree with him, but is not that what his criticism in fact amounts to?

The point comes out even more clearly in relation to Aristotle's logic, since truth and error are here more easily discernible and assessable than moral profundity or religious insight. The chapter on Aristotle's logic contains a brilliant summary of the criticisms which modern philosophers, partly under Russell's guidance, have brought against the Aristotelian system and an indication of the considerations which have led to its supersession. Now, throughout this criticism it is implied that on certain points Aristotle is wrong and that modern logicians have shown him to be wrong. Aristotle's logic, we are told, would have been all very well if it had been "a stage in a continual progress." In fact it was "a dead end" which put a stop to all thinking on logic for two thousand years. For long regarded as completely and finally true, it is, as Russell points out, full of specifiable errors. Because of them we now know that it is not true. Is logic, then, science? Assuredly not. Yet we have been told that only within the sphere of science is exact and definite truth obtainable. I see no escape from the conclusion that Russell holds (i) that there is such a thing as absolute truth, (ii) that we may know it, in the sense of knowing in regard to some things that they are true and in regard to others that they are false, and (iii) that the relevance of truth is not confined to those matters of fact with which science deals. This conclusion is reinforced by an unguarded utterance that slips into Russell's treatment of Plotinus: "A philosophical system," he says, "may be judged important for various kinds of reasons. The first and most obvious is that we think it may be true." I agree, but take leave to doubt whether, on his own premises, Russell is ever entitled to judge a system to be important for "this first and most obvious . . . of reasons."

The truth is that there runs through Russell's thinking an older strain which has never been reconciled with the strict empiricism of his later period. In his earlier period Russell was greatly influenced by Plato, and even admitted the objectivity and independence of universals. This has now been dropped, but he still invokes the concept of an objective world order of "stubborn facts" which the human mind explores but does not create and to which the human spirit is subject. In this mood he bids us adopt a modest attitude to objective fact and warns us against using reason to legislate, instead of conforming to the universe.

It is from the standpoint of this attitude that Russell brings severe criticism to bear upon the "power philosophies" of the earlier twentieth century, of which he takes John Dewey's as an example. Dewey is criticised for substituting for the concept of truth that of "warranted assertability." "Warranted assertability" means apparently that, if we believe in something hard enough and say it often enough and if enough of us do this, it will become true or "as nearly 'true' as we can make it," the point being that facts are not "stubborn" but are in the last resort made by us. Russell sums up Dewey's position as follows: "If I find the belief that Cæsar crossed the Rubicon very distasteful, I need not sit down in dull despair; I can, if I have enough skill and power, arrange a social environment in which the statement that he did not cross the Rubicon will have 'warranted assertability'."

Now this view Russell connects very properly with the current belief in human power which is in harmony with the age of successful science, increasing industrialism and collective enterprise. It is, indeed, *par excellence* the belief which is suitable to man in his capacity of manipulator of nature.

Russell criticises it on two grounds. First, it disintegrates the notion of truth in the sense in which to be true is to conform and correspond with instead of prescribing to objective fact.

Secondly, it savours of what he calls "cosmic

**History of Western Philosophy.* By BERTRAND RUSSELL. Allen and Unwin. 21s.

impiety," for it was precisely the concept of truth as dependent upon facts beyond our control which kept men humble. Modern man, Russell hints, has lost the sense of a non-human world order to which the human is subject and as a result has grown "too big for his boots," not in the role of a Prometheus defying the gods or of the lordly "great man" of the Renaissance, but through the collective power of his communities. The modern community, drunk with its power over nature, would do well to bear in mind the Greek conception of "a Necessity or Fate superior even to Zeus" by which man is bound and to beware of the sin of hubris. To abolish the concept of a non-human order of objective fact is to remove the check upon human pride. The consequences I put in Russell's own words:

"When the check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication of power—which invaded philosophy with Fichte, and to which modern men, whether philosophers or not, are prone."

C. E. M. JOAD

NIMMUKWALLAH

Wellington. RICHARD ALDINGTON. *Heinemann.* 15s.

Considering the number of times the life of the great Duke of Wellington has been written, Mr. Aldington deserves to be congratulated on his courage in returning to the subject; not for the reason that the subject has lost interest or been exhausted, but because he aspires to win laurels in a field where so many others have come to grief. Wellington, who was as extraordinary a specimen of humanity as Doctor Johnson, has not yet found a Boswell to immortalize him. Yet the material is all there, one would think. Every biographer, who has tried his hand, is snowed under by the quantity available. For a period of 45 years surely no man's words or deeds could ever have been more recorded. The Duke never made a mystery of himself; he was a perfectly straightforward man, always saying what he meant and doing what he intended. To his contemporaries his character was self-evident: they took him for granted: but at his death the veil of oblivion falls. Posterity, not privileged to meet the Duke in the flesh, in place of the man has constructed a legendary figure with an aquiline nose—a Tory demigod or a schoolboy's hero—in fact an Iron Duke. Carlyle in his time called him "a cast-metal man." and so he has remained—on a pedestal. The tin-openers of the biographers have all been blunted on such a solid object.

In his introduction Mr. Aldington acknowledges "the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of deducing the true nature of a very reticent and repressed man"; and hesitates to guess at what lay behind the iron mask. It is the Duke's self-dedication to a lifetime of public service that has impressed him and given him the key note for his book. He takes as his text an answer made by Wellington in 1806 to someone who asked why he was content to command an infantry brigade after his splendid services in India:—"For this plain reason, I am *nimmukwallah*, as we say in the East; that is, I have ate of the King's salt, and therefore I conceive it to be my duty to serve with unhesitating zeal and cheerfulness, when and wherever the King or his government may think proper to employ me." And along these lines Mr. Aldington has an easy road to travel. For there was nothing reticent or repressed about the Duke's sense of duty; it never failed to prompt him. As his wife, his friends and his enemies, his armies, his party, his country, and finally all Europe were to discover, there was no situation imaginable in which the Duke of Wellington would not "conceive it to be his duty" to do something or other.

Having chosen his simple text, Mr Aldington enlarges on it with enviable confidence. He takes in his stride the first fence that lies in wait for Wellington's biographers—the date of his birth. May 1st, 1769, pronounces Mr. Aldington unquestioningly—and forges ahead. True, the Duke did keep his birthday on May 1st., but then he may only have conceived it to be his duty to do so. The awkward facts are that most of the Dublin newspapers record the birth on May 1st., but that one magazine dates it April 29th; that the baptismal entry is dated April 30th; and that his old nurse used to think he was born on March 6th. Although a whole book was once written in an attempt to elucidate this conflict of evidence, it is but a trivial matter; and I adduce it only to indicate the way in which Mr. Aldington disposes of minor obstacles to plain, go-ahead narration.

Little is known of Wellington as a boy; and Mr. Aldington has no more to say about that period than any previous biographer. His mother declared "Arthur is food for powder and nothing more"; so his career was decided. The development of his sense of duty is traced from the age of 17, when he received his first commission and began to take his profession seriously. But the decisive date is 1793, when he bought the command of a regiment with money borrowed from his elder brother, gave up playing cards, burnt his violin, and made an application to be sent on active service. Mr. Aldington suggests three alternative reasons for these crucial decisions: the influence of Kitty Pakenham to whom he was engaged, a sense of obligation to his brother for lending him the money, or a belief that now or never was the opportunity to make a career. In the light of subsequent events the last reason is the most plausible. It would be strange if the most self-confident general in English history required any other reason but the consciousness of his own ability to lead him on to the battlefield.

The military campaigns occupy two thirds of *Wellington;* for it is in his appreciation of the Duke as a soldier that Mr. Aldington feels most at home with his subject. The battles of India, the Peninsula, and of Waterloo are all fought over again with admirable spirit. The author's personal experiences in the war of 1914-18 extort his unqualified admiration for a general who hated war, took no pride in bloodshed, and who never expected his soldiers to win his battles for him. Mr. Aldington handles military history so vividly, and has such a keen eye for the tactical situation, that any subsequent edition of *Wellington* should have the present casual sketch maps replaced by properly detailed plans of the various battlefields.

After Waterloo Mr. Aldington lays very proper stress on the half-forgotten and wholly neglected part played by Wellington in the peace settlement of Europe. Never did his common-sense approach to every problem show to greater advantage. In a mob of victorious Allies clamouring for revenge Wellington stood out for a peace that should be lasting, i.e. one that should be tolerable not only for the Allies but also for the French. Take the article of reparations, for instance. After two years of diplomatic wrangling between the claims of thirty-two sovereign powers the Duke was invited to arbitrate on the matter. In four months he cut down the total sum payable by France to less than a third of the original amount demanded, apportioned it, had his award accepted, and actually got the money paid. Whatever may be the ideological faults of the Concert of Europe, sponsored by Wellington, the simple fact remains that, from 1815 to the Duke's death in 1852, war never again broke out between the Great Powers—which was all that the Duke (who was not an ideological man) ever expected.

Over Tory politics and the Reform Bill the Duke's sense of duty runs somewhat counter to Mr. Aldington's twentieth-century views. The Macaulay tradition of squinting at history through political spectacles dies hard. It may be another century or two before figures of the Georgian epoch can be appraised, except in terms of their emotional response to the Industrial Revolution. Mr. Aldington feels obliged to justify the Duke's stubborn rearguard actions over the repeal of the Corn Laws, Catholic Emancipation and Reform by his constant fear of revolution—after the French manner. At any rate the Duke eventually conceived it to be his duty to swallow all three; and for this tardy admission of his political errors he is labelled a fool by the historians rather than a full-size villain of reaction.

His sense of duty will serve at a pinch to explain the Duke's public activities. His private life is as baffling to Mr. Aldington as to other biographers. Admittedly our knowledge of it is scanty. The Duke's only intimate friend was Charles Arbuthnot, whose discretion has lasted after death; no papers of his have ever come to light. Mr. Aldington seems to think some may still be hidden away in Apsley House. But Guedalla claimed to have had full access to all the Apsley House manuscripts; and the only references he quoted from them were tradesmen's bills and regimental accounts. As to women, the Duke took a common-sense line with them as with everything else, and he stated: "No woman has ever loved me." The negative should cover wife, mother and mistresses. Lady Mornington, the Duke's mother, was certainly a hard, unaffectionate woman. But the author is rather sentimental about Kitty Pakenham, who married Wellington in 1806: at her deathbed he suggests the Duke may have realised that she genuinely loved him. Yet surely when the Duke makes such a categorical statement, an author might conceive it to be his duty to believe him. Of the mistresses Mrs. Arbuthnot was by far the most important; and it is odd that Mr. Aldington makes only passing reference to her. For some fourteen years she and her husband lived with the Duke in a *ménage à trois* until she died; and after her death the Duke and Charles Arbuthnot went on living together for another sixteen years, until Charles died. Her house was the only "home" the Duke ever had; but who is now to say what went on inside it?

Mr. Aldington's *Wellington* naturally invites comparison with *The Duke*, the most ambitious biography that Guedalla ever wrote. Guedalla's case reveals a shocking waste of talents. In the spadework of scholarship he was most assiduous and reliable. He had a good nose for sniffing out facts of interest; and a quick eye for their appropriate juxtaposition. But his ear and his taste were deplorable. He always depreciated the rewards of his research by embodying them in a relentlessly flamboyant style. His prose is always striving for effect. Not a paragraph of his is complete without a sob or at least a sigh, a laugh or at least a chuckle. *The Duke* is a monument of industry and erudition, besmeared with so much flowery language as to be almost unreadable. *Wellington* owes much to Guedalla's careful documentation of source material and in the general plan of the book follows the same pattern. But Mr. Aldington's style is pedestrian, and even clumsy, with an occasional sardonic note; as if the author was deliberately trying to represent the uncritical, common-sense attitude to life of his hero. The emphasis is on the Duke's remarkable qualities as a general and his integrity of character; and within those limits the book gives as convincing an account of him as one can expect. But I conceive it to be my duty to repeat: The Duke of Wellington still awaits his biographer.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

CAPITALISM ANALYSED

Studies in the Development of Capitalism. By MAURICE DOBB. *Routledge.* 18s.

This is a most important book. There has been a tendency in this country not merely to narrow the historical perspective so that economic theory limits itself to the working of the capitalism of the present and the recent past, but for economic theory in its "purest" form to take leave of the real world altogether and to move into a realm so abstract that, as one economist has said of his own work, "the purely theoretical economist becomes unable to say that any opportunities or dangers which he diagnoses are or are not present in the actual world at any

particular date." The danger of sterility in economic theory is bad enough, but even more dangerous is the tendency to put forward policies which, despite the disclaimer that pure economic theory has nothing to do with the real world, are in fact based upon applications of that theory to particular situations. We have been warned by the Proposals for the Consideration of the International Conference on Trade and Employment!

Mr. Dobb is convinced that a study of Capitalism, in its origins and growth, is an essential foundation for any realistic system of economics. As he says, "the economist concerned with present day problems has certain questions of his own to put to historical data" and these eight studies are the result of twenty years questioning, mainly about the development of capitalism in Great Britain, but also drawing upon data from other countries to illuminate particular enquiries.

The first task is to define and characterise Capitalism itself. As Professor Tawney says: "An author is unlikely to make much of the history of Europe during the last three centuries if, in addition to eschewing the word, he ignores the fact." And Mr. Dobb quickly rejects those uses of the word which are so wide as to deny any specific meaning to Capitalism as a special historical system and those, such as the limitation to a state of unfettered free enterprise, which are so narrow as to make it impossible to define the systems immediately preceding and following it. Sombart's *geist* theory, and Bücher's definition in terms of the length of the route which goods traverse from producer to consumer are quickly disposed of, and Mr. Dobb plumps for Marx's meaning of Capitalism as a system of commodity production in which labour power itself has become a commodity, bought and sold in the market like any other object of exchange; a system requiring both the concentration of the ownership of the means of production in the hands of a minority class, and the emergence of a class of property-less persons who must live by selling their labour power. It follows from this that changes in the state of the labour market and the development of monopoly are of crucial importance; in Mr. Dobb's hands this definition does indeed "illuminate the actual process of historical development." Mr. Dobb is most careful not to force his material into his theoretical frame. Thus he remains somewhat uncertain about the causes of the decline of Feudal Serfdom. The growth of a money economy, closely identified with the growth of towns as corporate bodies, is not a sufficient explanation, since he finds many instances where the money economy only intensified the exploitation of serfs. And while the scarcity of labour in the fourteenth century led in many instances to substantial concessions to the serfs, in others the nobility reacted by intensifying feudal burdens and imposing more severe restrictions on movement.

The studies of the beginnings of the bourgeoisie and the rise of merchant and industrial capital show Mr. Dobb at his best. He argues most convincingly that the traditional view that burgher wealth was "produced" rather than acquired—through the extended division of labour made possible by the widening of markets, is quite inadequate. Not merely was a substantial part of foreign commerce thinly disguised plunder, but the new merchant class was quick to establish a monopoly of wholesale trade, without which the high concentration of wealth would not have been possible. The growth of merchant capital was not of itself sufficient to herald the era of modern capitalism: for the new merchant aristocracy became itself a conservative force. The "really revolutionary way" lay through the entry of the producers themselves into trade. Mr. Dobb admits that the details of this process are far from clear and that there is little evidence that bears directly on it. His support of Marx's thesis is derived from indirect evidence, which, he insists, cannot be explained in any other way.

A study of the growth of the proletariat brings us to the highest hurdle: "The Industrial Revolution and the Nineteenth Century." The author marshals his vast army of data with great skill: his treatment of the technological changes in particular is brilliant. Mr. Dobb sees in the Great Depression the turning point in British Capitalism towards the increasingly rigid structure of cartels and monopolies—whose further development in the major capitalist countries in the inter-war period and their connections with fascism form the subject of his last essay. However, Mr. Dobb strongly resists the conclusion that capitalism must everywhere pass into some kind of fascist phase:

> The continuance into peace-time of a form of State Capitalism, democratically controlled and operated in the interests of labour towards the maintenance of full employment and the curbing of monopolistic business organisation, seems the most probable outcome, at least over the major part of Europe.

Individually and taken together Mr. Dobb's studies are a most valuable contribution to economic literature, and to the understanding of the problems of our time.

G. D. N. WORSWICK

MAIDS

The English Abigail. By D. M. STUART. *Macmillan.* 15s.

A book about the maidservant in all her variety of circumstance from Plantagenet times to the middle of the nineteenth century is bound to provide the most exquisite pangs for readers whose own maidservants are non-existent or murderable. It is the employer who is suffering today. In the past it was the maid. Very well, let us read about it.

Miss D. M. Stuart presents *The English Abigail*, and so far as it goes it is very enjoyable reading—in this rather morbid sense. But it does not go far enough, for by stopping short with Miss Matty's Martha, Miss Stuart robs us of the telling postscript and awful moral of our own times, and cannot touch upon the two main causes of the change, namely, shortage of supply and a growing tenderness of conscience.

It is ironic that this tenderer conscience which has worked so favourably upon conditions of service should find itself at full strength only when there are no servants to be had. Or is the conscience not so tender after all, the improved conditions being more in the nature of a bribe than a scruple?

Such speculations Miss Stuart leaves quite out of it. What she is concerned with—and I suppose an author may be allowed to write his own book—is the particular instance, the detail, culled from records, letters, registers, police findings and English literature, especially English literature, of particular servants' particular lots.

The chapter headings are eloquent: Plantagenet Prologue, Tudor Background, Stuart Scene, Concerning Samuel Pepys, Deb. Willett and Some Others, Enter "Those Golden Augustans," Below Stairs at 5, Cheyne Row. And when we read in the blurb that "Among the Abigails may be found Queen Elizabeth's Blanch Parry, Dorothy Osborne's Jane Wright and Dr. Johnson's mother's Catherine Chambers," we know where we are. Dr. Johnson's mother's Catherine Chambers is pure gold, but they are all of them well-forged links in the Muse's Chain, and should be sent at once to Mr. Potter.

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fail to fish up a really withering anecdote with which to confound his friends, and his Abigail—if he has one. The unmarried sister who stays too long and does no chores may be moved to hear that spinsters were once conscripted to domestic service. Your friend, who thinks it is something to do with the times, may be told about Mr. Speaker Lenthall of the Long Parliament who left five pounds to be paid to the maid who "for seven years had not shifted her place." And for Abigail you may quote Bartholomew the Englishman who wrote in Latin—for safety's sake?—and summed up what the thirteenth century thought about it. We find him a hundred years later in translation: "The servaunt-woman is ordeyned for to lerne the wyve's rule, and is put to office and werke of traveylle, toylynge and slubberynge." She is nourished upon "grosse mete and symple." She is "kepte lowe under the yoeke of thraldom and of servage." She is also beaten with rods and scarcely suffered to rest or take breath by day or night.

How horrible; but this sort of thing does not last for long, quite soon in fact we hear familiar complaints from the employer of the times. Servants are not what they used to be, they toil not neither do they slubber, they eat heartily, they take days off for junketings, they break the sumptuary laws as well as the crocks, and they sleep in beds. "Now appears the priveleged waiting woman . . . and the poor relation," who is expected to make herself generally useful—the first mention of that odious phenomenon, the lady-help.

As servants go up in the world they tend to be taken rather dangerously into their mistress's confidence. In the eighteenth century this, so far as the books go, seems to have been a gay and absorbing business. But perhaps it was not always such good fun. If the Tudor mistress's secrets involved state matters, the servant might be put to the torture, where the noble employer went merely to the Tower or the block.

The amount of work the ordinary servant got through is quite impressive, but then in the households of the fairly well-to-do there were always a large number of servants. The modern housekeeper who is cook, slut and bottlewasher, wife, mother, companion, and gainfully employed person into the bargain, should remember this—and probably will.

It is the Victorian maid of all work who really deserves our sympathy—those stairs, those buckets of coal, the low wages, and quite often girls were expected to provide their own tea and sugar; the dark dank basements, the chilly attics. And for recreation, a walk to church on Sundays and the perusal of Miss Martineau's Guide to Domestic Service.

Better the eighteenth century, before the filth of the industrial age; and yet it is Victorian England which gives Miss Stuart some of her most appealing servants. Of course E.B.B.'s Wilson and Carlyle's "poor bit dottle Helen." But we must not step upon the blurb's preserves.

There is a quaint interest about all this, but it is apt to turn sickly sweet.

The girl we pick from this maid's calendar of the centuries is not laughed at, not quaint, but alive, alive-o, in a few sad lines, and never to be forgotten: *My mother had a maid called Barbara.*

Miss Stuart has left out Little Annie. Now Little Annie is what we must have had in mind when we spoke about the Victorians. She is Chapter and Verse, if she is not Literature, and we shall quote her.

> Little orphan Annie
> Has come to our house to stay
> To wash the cups and saucers up
> And brush the crumbs away
> And shoo the chickens off the porch
> And scrub the floors and sweep
> And light the fires and bake the bread
> And earn her board and keep.
> Annie's doing better today.

STEVIE SMITH

MUCH ADO ABOUT HECUBA

All for Hecuba. An Irish Theatrical Autobiography. By MICHAEL MAC LIAMMÓIR. *Methuen.* 21s.

All who have to do with the theatre turn either into true believers or atheists: there seems to be no middle way. The stage door is the convent gate, and there one leaves the world of grown-up things behind. "Ach, my dears," Mr. Mac Liammóir was told by a Croatian actress whom he describes as "celebrated," "I say to you, we all want to live our lives, to do our tours, to make our appearances—what please is the use of all this political Quatsch?" "I do not hold with this great passion of love they talk of in the story-books," an old priest told A.E. "I think the sacraments give us all the graces we need." Here, for the true theatrical believer is peace, though the atheist's suspicious eye may note the fever in the air since Reverend Mother deprived Sister Mary Agnes of access to the morning paper, or Sister Francis Xavier edged Sister St. John of the Cross out of the innocent affections of the convent chaplain.

Nature obviously intended young Michael Wilmore for a writer, since it sent him back from London to Dublin, full of enthusiasm for Hecuba, *alias* Cathleen Nee Houlihan, drove him on to the study of Irish, and made him adopt a Gaelic surname of exotic appearance and doubtful authenticity. Working as an actor in the Irish provinces, he fell in with a young man from the Old Vic, one Hilton Edwards, who had a colossal enthusiasm for production and a capacity for hard work denied to the children of Hecuba. At this point Nature gave one look at Mr. Edwards and left Michael Wilmore to his fate. Against an Englishman with a bee in his bonnet the poor soul had no chance.

Between them they started in Dublin a little theatre which seated a hundred, and on a stage the size of a pocket handkerchief did admirable productions of whoppers like *Peer Gynt*. It might be said that Mr. Edwards introduced modern stage lighting to Dublin though the introduction has borne no fruit. "The Bhoys," as Dublin called them, then moved to their present home in a pleasant Georgian concert hall, where they found a rich backer in the Earl of Longford, and among other things produced a good *Faust* and a really fine *Brand* which I still remember with pleasure. Unfortunately, Lord Longford grew altogether too enthusiastic, and instead of making sand-castles of his own, started to interfere with Mr. Edwards's. The two friends were deeply hurt when the Earl, an even more passionate admirer of Hecuba than Mr. Mac Liammóir, frowned on the infidelity of an Egyptian tour sponsored by the British Council. Undaunted, they struck out on their own again and again made good, though apparently the hurt remains, for an ecstasy of sub-actionable malice informs Mr. Mac Liammóir's account of Lord Longford's establishment of the rival religious house. He need not have worried. Though the Gate Theatre has grown decidedly less venturous than when it played to an audience of a hundred, Mac Liammóir and Edwards are now the only Dublin company which can be relied on to produce a really competent show.

I fear it is only the writer in Mr. Mac Liammóir who still sees his stage life as an affair with Hecuba, and perhaps it is some recollection of that youthful indiscretion which gives liveliness and colour to the rather dull story of a rather dull theatre. For it must be admitted that apart from the two gay and gallant Bohemians who made

LOUIS GOLDING *writes :—*

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good, the Gate Theatre has added nothing of importance to theatrical history. Mr. Mac Liammóir's criticism of the Abbey Theatre as a mere "Literary Theatre" may explain why; or Mr. Edwards' phrase, "My conviction that the theatre is a grown up toy." "What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? What please is the use of all this political Quatsch?"

The actor in Mr. Mac Liammóir has triumphed and from behind the convent grille he looks out at us, smiling benevolently at our worldly childishness. It is the holy, happy, peaceful life within which he chronicles and which all true believers will appreciate. "The kindest heart in Ireland," "the best company in the world," "twinkling and delicious, radiating always a festive mystery," "one of the loyalest men I have known, the kindest and most unforgetting of friends; and somewhere through the turbulent vapours of his temperament there flows a broad river full of stars" (Orson Welles), "golden and brave as a lioness" (Sybil Thorndike), "a brilliant, generous creature with a restless equine defiance about his nostrils" (me!) "a boundless sense of poetry and the brain of a man half eagle, half child" (can this possibly be the same actor whom a Dublin dramatic critic acidly described as acting a part "like a pint of porter"?).

"Michael, boy," I find myself saying in an unexpectedly loud voice, "all jokes aside though . . .," and suddenly I find everyone looking at me in horror and indignation, remember that I am on holy ground, have lost the faith or never had it, and tiptoe quietly out past the stage door into the lamplit, realistic, rationalist street.

FRANK O'CONNOR

NEW NOVELS

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A Foolish Wind. By FRANCIS ASKHAM. *Bodley Head.* 8s. 6d.

The difference between Russian and British soldiers, if we are to believe the chroniclers of the time, is very marked. The British soldier is full of self-pity and abject fear, without pride or imagination. He feels more hatred for his superior officers than for the enemy and is happiest when robbing corpses or committing rape. The Russian, on the other hand, is a conscious hero. His greatest moment of weakness is when he weeps for the sufferings of his Fatherland. From time to time, he clenches his fist and utters loud threats against the invading beast. A protector of women, children and cultural monuments, his mind never stoops to personal gain. If (as I am afraid I did) one rather enjoys *They Dug a Hole* and finds *The Wife* merely emetic, then that is no more than a sign that one is decadent, like the British soldier.

This has been an unnaturally good fortnight in fiction. The books listed above are not the best but the most problematic, the most in need of accurate description. There are others in which established authors are writing what is expected of them. It is possible for their respective fans to go to bookshops or lending libraries and make enquiries after Mr. Maclaren-Ross, who loathes the army with real virulence and writes of Soho drunks with mild affection; Miss Kay Boyle, who agonises with the French Maquisards; Miss Mary Lavin, who indulges the backward, neutral and leisurely Irish and Miss Stella Gibbons, who cherishes the damp souls of housemaids and of school-teachers.

Miss Gibbon's scene is laid in Hampstead and Highgate. So is Miss Elizabeth Myers's, at any rate to begin with. In a room in Highgate, a blackmailer lies dead. His four victims are there together, and in the hand of one of them, an intelligent and charming old lady of sixty-five, is a smoking revolver. Mrs. Christopher gives her name and address to the other three, in case they find themselves under suspicion. The rest of the book describes the circumstances which "drive" each of them to Scotland Yard to lay information against their deliverer and claim the reward. This reward has in fact been put up by Mrs. Christopher herself. Her son is an Assistant Commissioner of Police. He arranges that she shall not give herself up until the loyalty of the other three has been tested.

It seems to me a well-found plot, and the opening is magnificent. But it is also ambitious, full of pitfalls and very exacting. The first informer is an elderly clerk in love with a whore and eaten up with self-righteousness. He claims the money in order to fulfil his mission of redeeming the girl. In fact, it sets her up in a whorehouse of her own. The second informer is an uprooted peer's daughter living with a second-rate intellectual. The tension has slackened. Then we come to a seedy doctor already presented as a personification of the power-urge, and this part should have raised the tension to a climax. It does not. Miss Myers's stamina is not up to it, and she has already made certain fundamental mistakes. Suspense has gone. We know that Mrs. Christopher is to be betrayed thrice. We know why. We know that the thirty pieces of silver will always fail to bring even the comparative happiness that was looked for and that, symbolically, each Judas will "hang himself." The grounds for blackmail were insufficient in the first two cases, and even in the case of the doctor the blackmailer does not appear to have held any proofs. Fear being the predominant factor in lives like these, it seems odd that each informer goes to claim the reward without fear. And, in general, action is seen to be petering out in argument. For in each of the four situations, there are but two characters, Mrs. Christopher and her son, the clerk and the prostitute, the girl and her lover, the doctor and his dying brother, and in each case there is one who believes in God and one who doesn't. The only thing which rises to a climax in Part Four is the religious debate, and this climax, because the brother is now dead, has to be entrusted to a servant-girl who suddenly takes his place and begins to speak with disconcerting eloquence. I quite see that I am quarrelling with a remarkable book for not being other than it is, but Miss Myers clearly aimed at a masterpiece.

The genealogy of *Mrs. Christopher* would include both Graham Greene and Georges Bernanos. With *Mist in the Tagus* one's memory has to go a little further back. It is the story of one of those love-affairs in which a young lady is somehow or other meant to heal a young man, the young man being of doubtful sexual denomination. It is, however, set in a Portuguese fishing-village before the war, and there is no shortage of local colour. It is a book which suggests to me at least five years of nostalgic application, yet the result is clear and crisp. I don't know whether it is possible for a novel to be too carefully and well-written. If it is possible, then *Mist in the Tagus* is a case in point. It belongs to a period. It suggests the late Twenties, and it strongly suggests Mary Butts. That it is set in Portugal seems a little wrong at first. One had thought these love-affairs always took place either on the Riviera or in Brittany, occasionally in Cornwall.

A Foolish Wind has a little of the same mood. It is set in a fictitious country which has been occupied and liberated. Yet it has that older, voluptuous and at the same time curiously

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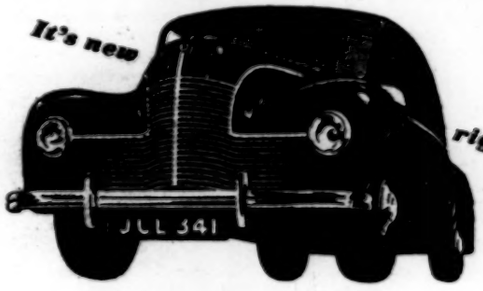

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